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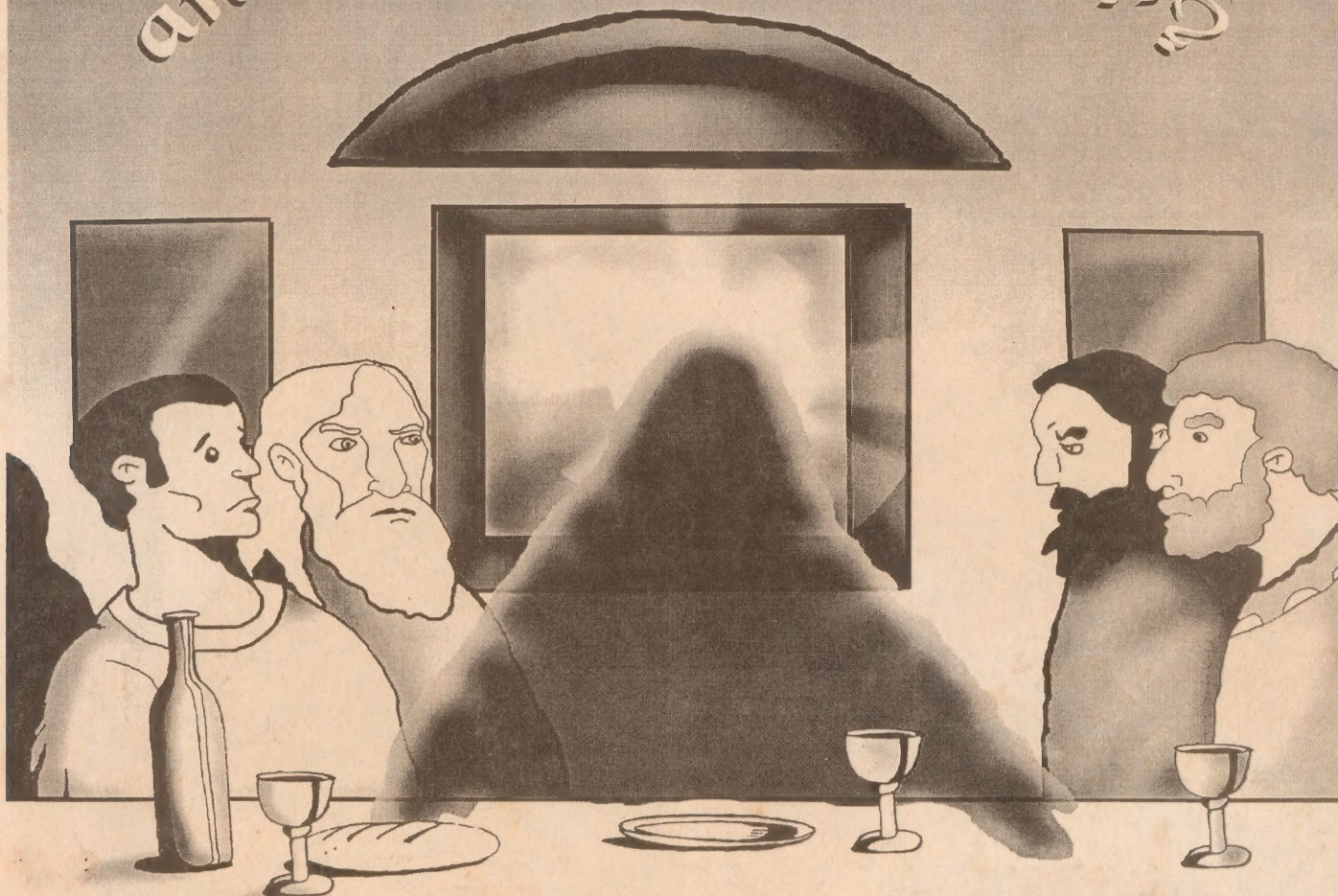
# IMPACT

December '00/January '01

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## Did Jesus Exist and Does it Matter?



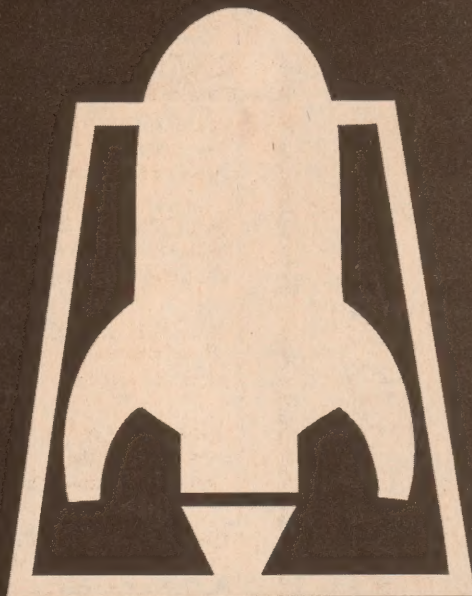
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# things within

IMPACT PRESS • ISSUE 30 • DECEMBER '00/JANUARY '01



## DID JESUS EXIST AND DOES IT MATTER?

by Gary Sloan

For many, the existence of Jesus matters immensely. But the facts show Jesus as a fabrication, not a historical figure. However, those with a cherished belief in the existence of Jesus are quick to attack anyone who says otherwise. • PAGE 26

"And the day will come, when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as His Father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva, in the brain of Jupiter."

-- Thomas Jefferson

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness."

-- Dalai Lama

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# IMPACT<sup>®</sup> press

covering issues the way the media should

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**A Fact from IMPACT:** When asked to name his favorite among all his paintings, Pablo Picasso replied "the next one."

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves, and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." - Thomas Jefferson



## **From The Editor**

**Nader wins! Nader wins!**

It was an impossibility for that headline to appear following the 2000 election and remains unlikely in the 2004 election, given our current system. Nearly 4 million people, however, cast their vote for a third party candidate in the recent election, proving that a lot of Americans are sick and tired of our two-party system.

Of those nearly 4 million people, over 2.5 million cast their vote for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader. Although he fell shy of the 5% vote needed for matching funds in 2004, what was accomplished was a rallying of support for Nader and the third party concept. Now Nader and other third party activists must seize this opportunity to continue the fight. Things need to change over the next four years, or third party candidates will remain "unviable."

First of all, the public needs to speak out for better and more comprehensive media coverage. The newspapers and TV shows are the first key to exposure, and exposure gets votes. Major media outlets must be pressured to give time to viable third parties such as the Green Party, Reform Party and Libertarian Party. This means giving them the same amount of time and coverage as the Democrats and Republicans. How do we force that? Write them, call them, email them with a plea for honest, fair coverage of elections.

The media says America doesn't care about or want to vote for third parties. How the hell does the media know this? Most Americans know little or nothing about the alternatives to the "big two."

Secondly, the debate process needs to be changed. The "non-partisan" Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) must open the nationally-televised debates to more than just the two major parties. Currently, candidates are required to have at least 15% of the popular vote (according to national public opinion polls prior to the debate) in order to participate in the debates, something very difficult for third party candidates to obtain without media exposure. Proposals have been made to lower this requirement, how-

ever, the CPD has ignored them. The fact is, allowing a couple third party candidates into the debates would introduce new concepts and ideas to an American public that is craving for something of substance instead of the wishy-washy rhetoric of the current two-party system. Regardless of whether or not a third party would be elected as a result of their inclusion, at least these new ideas would be on the table and the Republicans and Democrats wouldn't be able to ignore them.

"I think it's a sorry state for a democracy that third party candidates are so shut out and so frustrated by a lack of democracy that we have to do this kind of thing," said Medea Benjamin, a Green Party candidate for U.S. Senate in California, after being cited for trespassing and resisting arrest at a Democratic rally just prior to the 2000 election. Benjamin was excluded from a series of televised debates with Democratic incumbent Dianne Feinstein.

Finally, the election process needs to drop the electoral college. It's an old system applied to a country that has changed a lot since it was first created. Instead of counting each citizen's vote, it first groups them. Therefore, a vote for a candidate in Alaska means nothing if a majority of that state votes for a different candidate. That doesn't seem fair. Americans need to be trusted with their vote. And their vote should go to the candidate they select, regardless of how the rest of the state votes. We're electing a Federal position, not a state position. Power must be in the hands of the people, not the electoral college. Maybe then people would be more interested in voting.

The system we have is one where most people are voting against the Democratic or Republican candidate. One would be hard-pressed to find many voters who feel Gore or Bush is the candidate for them. More often, people say stuff like, "Bush is too stupid. I can't let him be president" or "Al Gore is too shady to be president." What kind of election system is it when you're not really casting a vote for who you want but rather a vote against who you don't want elected?

• craig mazer •

## **Make an IMPACT**

**Commission on Presidential Debates**  
<http://www.debates.org/>

**Citizens for True Democracy**  
<http://www.truedemocracy.org>



# Speak Your Mind. . .

Please proof your letters. IMPACT will try to decipher them. However, help us avoid having to do extra work. ALSO - keep your letters under 400 words. Thanks!

## IMPACT:

I want to applaud Impact Press for your coverage on greyhound racing ("Dogs In Danger" by Patricia L. Howard, Issue #28). As a greyhound lover, I am sadly aware of the abuse and indignity these dogs suffer on a daily basis. It far too often goes unnoticed. You shed some light on the matter, and for that I am deeply grateful.

I read your article a week before my greyhound died of bone cancer. Cairo was a majestic yet gentle dog. She was trusting and loving. I always knew she was happy to be alive. Her bone cancer was most likely caused by the drugs she was given at the track. The drugging and overall poor treatment of the dogs destroy their immune systems. Hers couldn't fight off the cancer. I had her put to sleep. It was the hardest thing I have ever done. But from my sadness, an even greater anger was born.

Because of your article, I learned about Grey2K and their fight to ban greyhound racing from Massachusetts. I have also been in touch with their organization as well as the Greyhound Protection League. I am going to be an active participant in GPL, and if work permits I'll be in MA before the election to help with Grey2K. With any luck, greyhound racing will become a thing of the past in Florida, too. I'm going to see that it happens. It's now a personal mission.

Again, thank you for your support and the well-written article. You gave Cairo a voice. You also helped to expose this societal disgrace for what it really is: evil.

Sincerely,  
Nicole L. Stauffer

P.S. Grey2K knows about you and your article. I promised to send them copies for their archives. They also thank you.

## IMPACT:

While the crux of the argument presented in the article ("Thou Shall Not Kill" by Morris Sullivan, Issue #29) is true: "Religions evolved to protect and unify tribes," the utopian view of the virtues of modern governments is simplistic and far from the truth.

Most of the article deals accurately with the negative impact of religion upon human history, then the author quickly and

quietly asserts the following unsubstantiated and unsubstantiate-able warrant: "Most modern governments have learned that they can reap more benefits through cooperation than war." What governments might he be referring to? Could it be that those governments, if they exist at all, belong to the same tribe? And that they altruistically believe in "cooperation" because they have already decimated rival factions and serious threats to their nation's/tribe's autonomy?

Beware of arguments that correctly analyze what they view as the 'problem' and they swiftly skim over what they assert to be the solution.

In addition, while the author points out that religious laws against killing often are limited to not killing members of the given tribe, modern governments only 'cooperate' with their allies or with members of their union (i.e., members of their ideological or financial tribe). The union repeatedly enjoins war against "rebel governments" that refuse to "cooperate."

Returning to the author's characterization of religion, it is too easy to point to the Book of Deuteronomy and use it to sum up the Abrahamic (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) religions in totality. There are many passages in the Qu'ran and Bible (and I believe in the Torah as well) that specifically refer to protecting the rights of individuals who are not of your tribe. In Islam for example, the religious beliefs of other groups, though firmly seen as incorrect, are to be allowed and their adherents are to be protected within the Muslim state, as long as (and here is the key point) those groups have not declared war against Muslims and Islam.

The violent passages in the Qu'ran refer specifically to instances in which Muslims have been attacked by other religious groups (i.e., they form a strategy for self-defense). In such cases war is to be fought to win...to the death. However, even then, Muslims are enjoined to make peace if the other side sincerely pushes for it.

Undoubtedly religion has and is being used for political gains by so-called religious people. However hypocrites have always and will always use whatever is at their disposal to achieve their own selfish political aims. Be it concepts of religion, communism, democracy, peace or cooperation, hypocrites will extol the benefits of each whenever they suit the self-interests of their

group (or tribe).

Anonymous

## IMPACT:

When will all Americans wake up and realize we are a nation of violent, barbaric people. We go about our business with blinders on, telling other peoples how to live when we ourselves do not practice what we preach. Oh, how terrible are the Japanese for killing whales in the "name of science". How terrible are greedy fisherman for hunting and killing sharks and how terrible are hunters and poachers for killing endangered animals for a body part. But look at us, at the cruel ways we slaughter our animals for food. Shame on the puppy mills, shame on horse racing and the cruel and unusual punishment of these animals who can no longer run. And greater shame on Greyhound racing ("Dogs In Danger" by Patricia L. Howard, Issue #28), the breeding of beautiful animals to race and the cruel and unusual punishment most endure by trainers and owners and the tracks themselves. Shame on us for the terrible slaughter of the "unlucky" hound who just was not running his heart out fast enough or was not making enough money for the owner. Shame on us for allowing it to continue for the "sports" who gamble and the profits of the greedy.

Shame on us for letting them hang, shoot, bury alive injured or unwanted Greyhounds, for allowing them to cage the dogs in a crate where they eat drink and sleep until taken out to race and then back in the cage. Taken out to relieve themselves and stretch their legs 3 times a day if they are lucky. A terrible life for such a gentle and loving creature.

Wake up America, animals do have rights and just because they cannot speak for themselves, at least hear the messages of those who take the time to cry out for them.

Take possession of a rescued Greyhound and learn about the finest household pet alive - gentle, loving, clean, intelligent, relaxed dogs who can live in an apartment and home and who need no more space and exercise than any other dog. I know, as I have two.

Edward Rapisardi  
Leesburg, Florida



# SICK OF IT ALL

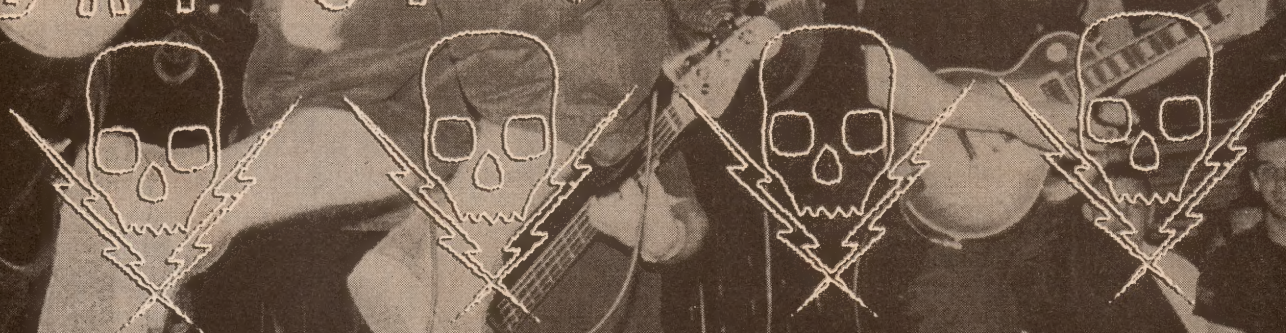
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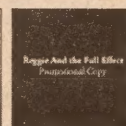
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# Notes from the Cultural Wasteland

*morris sullivan*  
**morris sullivan**



**IF YOU'RE READING THIS**, it's either the Holiday season or just past it. For me, it's been the holiday season since late September, when I started writing a stage adaptation of "A Christmas Carol" for a local theatre. Almost as soon as I started, my "day job" also became very holiday-oriented.

See, I make my living as a freelance writer, and one of my bread-and-butter clients is a newspaper published in a smallish suburban community not far from where I live. The paper is an edition of a larger one that serves several counties along the east coast of Florida, and one of the things the "little paper" does for revenue is publish a series of those pull-out, tabloid-style sections that exist mainly to provide an excuse to sell ads. From Thanksgiving on, they put out a lot of those, all geared toward selling ads to people who want to sell Christmas presents to other people.

I write most of the articles that fills those special sections. I don't buy that paper, so I rarely see my stuff in print. Maybe I'm wrong, but I assume that if I did pick up one of those special sections, I'd discover that my words look a lot like filler between ads. I imagine that's especially true this time of year, when I'm writing stories for the "Gift Guide" and "Christmas Countdown." Most journalists would sneer at the stories I write for those things; they'd call them "fluff" and compare them unfavorably with hard news, investigative journalism, and so on.

I don't care. I enjoy it. I get to interview a lot of people; most of them aren't very controversial, most aren't famous, most have never done anything that will get them on the six o'clock news or a daytime TV talk show. (And at least in that respect, most probably don't know how lucky they are.)

Positive news and general interest stories don't sell as many papers as, say, a president getting head in his office or an election that won't seem to end. However, a lot of the people I've interviewed in recent months have done things that, to me, are a lot more newsworthy than the people who populate the "news" sections of the paper.

For example, I talked to a fellow a few days ago about what it was like to "play Santa." A city bureaucrat in "real life," he puts on the red suit and whitens his beard every year to ride on fire trucks in parades and that sort of thing. The fire trucks also take him to under-served communities, where they park somewhere and let the kids come visit Santa.

"It was a really cold night," he told me about one such trip. "And this little girl came running up, dressed in a thin cotton nightgown, and barefoot. I put my coat around her shoulders to keep her warm while she told me what she wanted for Christmas. You know what she wanted? A bowl of ice cream." He and his pals from the fire department took the little girl to an ice cream parlor and saw that she got her Christmas wish. "It's things like that," said Santa, "that keep me coming back and putting that red suit on every year."

I interviewed another man for a different story, a chaplain at a county juvenile corrections facility. He was cautious about talking to me — he'd been burned by the press before. "A lot of the media," he said, "don't treat kindly" people like himself, who happen to be religiously-inclined. I found that interesting. I'm a fairly agnostic guy and don't believe in heaven, hell, nor the afterlife. But the man's obvious dedication to his work — his love for the troubled souls he tried to save by teaching them better ways to live on this

earth, in this society — didn't offend me in the least. And it pained me to think that someone who works as hard as he does, at what is probably a pretty thankless task, should have been slapped around in

**Positive news and general interest stories don't sell as many papers as, say, a president getting head in his office or an election that won't seem to end.**

print by some prick of a "journalist."

I promised him I'd treat him fairly, and I did. It was a positive story about positive things, and he called me after the paper came out to "God bless" me.

I've talked to dozens of others like Santa and the Chaplain: people who run Assisted Living Facilities for the elderly; an owner of a small toy store that teaches kids how to do yo-yo tricks; a founder of a domestic-violence shelter; a woman who works in an "adult" store that talked about helping married people find books to improve their sex lives; artists who discard big-money careers to pursue their dreams; and lots of other people, possibly much like yourself, who do amazing things every day.

None of these interviews will generate much controversy. None will spark a week-long, one-topic marathon on CNN, as did the presidential blow job and the presidential election debacle. Certainly, none will win me a Pulitzer.

I don't care. I enjoy talking to these people, and giving them a little credit, even if it's in the "fluff" section of the paper.

And I'll bet neither Clinton, Gore, nor Bush have called any of the big-paper/TV/radio reporters lately to wish them, "God bless you." ❧



# A Big Government Scam

**THE BIGGEST GOVERNMENT SCAM**, next to the corrupt Defense Budget, is the War On Drugs. I think it's just a cheap excuse to violate innocent Americans' civil rights. There are countless stories about how law enforcement targets minority drivers as suspected drug dealers.

I wonder how white Americans who defend racial profiling would feel if they were constantly targeted as white supremacists simply because of the color of their skin.

According to the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), more blacks are arrested for marijuana possession than whites. One of the cities NORML named as having a high black arrest rate is my very own city, Orlando. As I mentioned in a previous article, Orlando's black motorists are six times more likely to have their cars searched for drugs than whites, according to an article in the *Orlando Sentinel*.

Speaking of Orlando, I remember another incident that gave The City Beautiful a racist black eye. This one involved Orlando's second highest minority group, Puerto Ricans.

Suburban white youth were overdosing on heroin. There was a big write-up about the deaths in the *Orlando Sentinel*. In this same article, a law enforcement figure blamed the rise of local heroin on the increasing Puerto Rican population.

Understandably, this outraged the Puerto Rican community. Things got so bad that the *Orlando Sentinel* had to write an editorial stating that the paper wasn't prejudiced against the offended minority group.

The sickening matter of the whole thing was how close the law enforcement figure came to blaming the heroin deaths on Puerto Ricans. Ideas like that can only lead to the targeting of Hispanics, or anyone that looks Hispanic, as potential heroin dealers. I wouldn't put it past the local police departments to use this logic as a way to violate the civil rights of Orlando's Hispanics. This would all be done in the name of the War On Drugs.

As I mentioned before, this is like targeting all white people as potential Klan members in the name of a War On Bigotry.

Another Florida hotbed for civil rights violations is one that was profiled on 60 Minutes, the Volusia County Sheriff's Department. Under Sheriff Vogel, black and Hispanics driving along Interstate 95 were routinely stopped and searched for drugs. If large amounts of cash were found in the vehicle, it was seized by the sheriff's department. In order for the innocent drivers to get most (but not all) of their money back, they had to sign an agreement promising not to sue the department. The rest of the money was used to pay for new equipment for the Volusia County Sheriff's Department.

According to an article in *The Nation*, this legalized robbery is not unique to Florida. The *Boston Globe* revealed that local forfeitures of \$10,000 or more would result in a reduction in or the elimination of drug trafficking charges. In Los Angeles, a deputy sheriff said that officers planted evidence and falsified reports to get "probable cause" for cash seizures. In Louisiana, it was found that forfei-

ture money was not only diverted to local police but also was diverted to ski trips they took.

Because of the government's obsession with the War On Drugs, it is far easier to get a search warrant for drug suspicion than any other suspected criminal activity.

And I thought the Constitution was supposed to protect Americans from this kind of activity. Evidently, in the eyes of law enforcement, it doesn't. Maybe if enough white people get their rights violated, America will have to stop this kind of legal terrorism.

Both the Democrats and the Green Party have spoken of the bigotry involved in the War On Drugs, but unlike the Democrats, the Green Party wants to end the War.

I'm beginning to agree with the Green Party. I keep remembering what I learned about the days of Prohibition. Alcohol was illegal, yet folks were still getting drunk. According to the writings of Gore Vidal, alcoholism actually rose during this time. The more the government tried to outlaw alcohol, the more folks wanted to drink it. (Prohibition was lifted due to the increase of organized crime surrounding it.)

If the government is so concerned about America's health, why hasn't it banned that highly addictive drug called nicotine? Could it be the "donations" tobacco companies give to political parties?

There was a time when many African-Americans believed that the government was putting drugs into their community. The argument was how could drugs come from one country, pass through the suburbs and come straight to the black community undetected. Something was up.

Many folks dismissed this as paranoid talk until an article appeared in a San Jose newspaper. The article discussed how government agents sold crack to a Los Angeles gang member, and how this contributed to the wide-spread availability and use of crack. (Supposedly, this was done to finance the Contras in Nicaragua.)

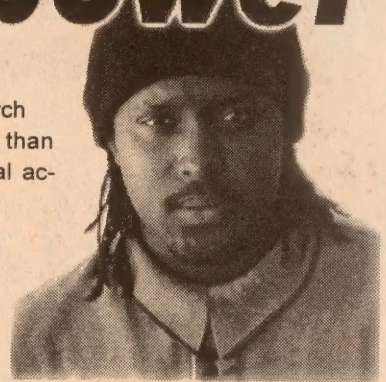
This furthers my belief that the War On Drugs is a crock.

I believe money spent on fighting the war should be spent on educating Americans about the dangers of drugs. I believe more money should be spent on drug treatment instead of building more and more prisons to house these victimless criminals.

The last thing I believe is something writer Morris Sullivan once suggested — decriminalize drugs. Don't make it legal to sell drugs but don't throw folks in jail for possessing drugs.

I don't think the government will go for our suggestions. Too many high paid officials would be out of a job. ❧

# mind power



by patrick scott barnes



## Step Lively, Please

### The Cattleization of Urban America

By Tor Hyams

I fell into a kind of paranoid Jewish retro-shock when I heard the MTA (Metro Transportation Authority) man saying those words, "Step Lively, Please..." as he tried in vain to usher thousands of New York subway passengers onto the S train from Times Square heading toward Grand Central Station. I was getting off of the S train, but into what? 1940's Germany? Jesus! I'm Jewish. I'm going to be slaughtered! Okay, Tor, settle down. This is not Germany. This is New York. Sure, it's brutally in your face and utterly obnoxious, but Nazis are somewhat scarce, even in the city. It's that damn Jewish paranoia again. Funny how often I get that for such a non-religious man. Nazis or not, I got to thinking. I thought a lot about cows.

We are all cattle. We follow each other around like the blind leading the blind straight into a ditch (where we will all be machine-gunned down by George Bush, Jr., of course). Think about it. You wake up. You take a crap. You go to work. You sit in a cubicle...bored, relishing those tawdry 5 minute breaks by the water cooler only to find that it's three o'clock and not quitting time yet. You go home. You eat. You crap again. You watch TV. You get high. You sleep. Sound familiar? Moo.

Even if you're lucky enough to avoid the veal-fattening cubicle, you're still being prodded into conformity by the mass media at every turn.

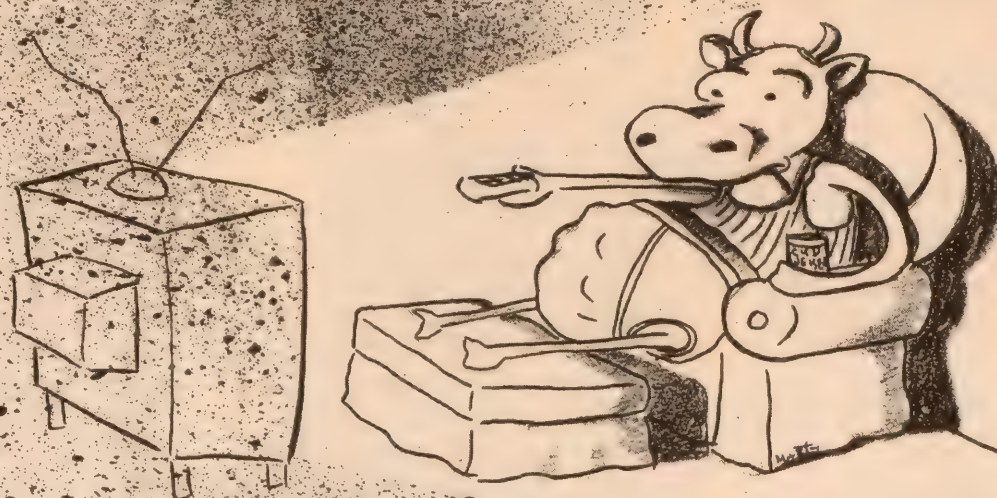
Are we witnessing the malaise of urban America? Somehow living in a major city makes people extremely apathetic. At first, you care. You're hungry. You're a go-getter. But then you get what you've been looking for and, within mere weeks, you're part of the crowd. Most people stop right there. Success breeds apathy. Apathy gives way to becoming a follower. Are we grazing yet? Of course, we are. Moo.

Consider Los Angeles and New York just in terms of transportation. The New York subway is a stinking piece of rat shit. It's horrible. Armageddon, if you will. It smells like sewage and most of the time, you're butted up (literally) against some hairy armed Latin gentleman only because you simply couldn't wait for the next car that may have had a little more room to stand. You pile on with the rest of the cows so you could get home that five minutes sooner...and for what? To crap. To eat. To watch TV. To sleep? Silly. Besides, you sleep standing up anyhow. All cows sleep upright. It's a fact. Moo.

As for Los Angeles, lately, no subways. But Nazis? Of course, LA has Nazis. After all, Hollywood is home to Disney. No cows there, just mice (struggling production assistants). In LA, it's cars. It's a fact that there are more cars in Los Angeles than there are people. So we drive around in our little pods all following one another, going only as fast as the idiot in front of us.

Need I point out the obvious? Cattle, dammit! That's how cows do it; one behind the other, each





guided by the smell of ass in front of him.

How did we all become so well trained and why do we put up with it? (Ahhh, the rhetoric of it all...don't answer that).

We do it because we can. It's easy. Following the crowd takes no effort. It also produces no results, but results happen on their own simply by virtue of existing. You live and things happen. Ahh, the sweet smell of apathy again.

We put up with all of it. We continue to ride the subways and drive in our cars. We persist in our cubicles by making them a little more homey. (Tacking up pictures of our dogs and lovers.) We let it happen because we're essentially a passive species. Passivity is apathy's worst accomplice.

It's the government's fault. They started it. They made the rules we follow that connect the shoulder bone to the arm bone...to grandma's house we go. They created *Survivor* and 80 million Americans watched every single week. They did it. BUT, They are not to blame. We are. We watch it. We eat it. We lick it. We fuck it. Whatever they tell us to do, we do it. Consider the cow. We put the cow in a field, throw some hay in there and make sure the grass is

growing strong. The cow grazes, eats, craps, sleeps and gets fat. Once the cow is fat enough, it is brought to the slaughterhouse to be turned into either a Big Mac or a filet mignon. Sound familiar? We are the same. Me, you and the cow all wear the same yoke on our shoulders.

Think about all of this the next time you are on your way to work and you've got some guy who smells like urine pressed up against you and you're passively not doing anything about it, all because you have to get to "there" so you can sit in front of a computer screen for eight hours doing something that is devoid of challenge or reason. Think about the cow. How much longer until they bring you to be slaughtered? Years? Days? Minutes? Now. ☛

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## over-priced musings



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Don Pflaster

# Heroism

**We're pretty damned short on heroes these days.**

Really, in an age of such uncompassionate cynicism and incredulity, where you're more inclined to punch a stranger in the mouth than kiss 'em on the cheek, it's thoroughly difficult to find people so worthy of our praise and admiration that we can place them on a pedestal of worship. Hardly anyone in today's politics will likely ever be placed on that pedestal, since every person in that realm is under the watchful eye of the half that disagrees. Hardly anyone in the corporate world will be seen by very many as a hero, because the common man has an intense and well-placed mistrust of the rich and powerful.

We need action, daunting pitfalls, and obstacles to the prize besetting combatants before we can have heroes. Granted, we're seeing a lot of action in politics these days, but it's an extremely abnormal spike. Even before all the real action started there, CNN was shamelessly reducing the electoral college count to a sporting event, even going as far as to put a small electoral votes score box in the corner of the screen like it was a frickin' football game. When Gore was up 260-246, I was thinking, "Wow! All

**When Gore was up  
260-246, I was  
thinking, "Wow! All  
Bush needs is four  
more touchdowns and  
he's got it!"**

Bush needs is four more touchdowns and he's got it!"

Stock markets give business a sort of scoreboard so that we can invent action and do play-by-plays on CNBC. But nonetheless, very rarely does an individual player emerge from within the corporate world to energize and fascinate us.

Heroes in our movies and stories of old have been brave adventurers, risking life and limb to complete a quest. Be it Perseus rescuing Andromeda from certain death, Luke Skywalker destroying the Death Star with his pair of well-placed proton torpedoes, or John Goodman rescuing everyone in *Arachnophobia*, heroes have traditionally had to capture not just our hearts, but our *attention* with slam-bang action.

Which begs the question – where are we to find action in American culture? In movies and books, yes, but the characters in those worlds are fictional. Where do we find real action among real people, genuine American heroes that we can truly stand behind and marvel in their superhuman and physically strenuous accomplishments without deriding them for their personal beliefs or social status? I can think of only two places: war and sports. And when there is no war going on, well, then there's sports – the fabricated stage for limitless action and the peacetime hero factory.

I'm certainly not immune from any of its power. Something about seeing a bunch of guys wearing uniforms taps into a special gland in my brain. I was glued to the TV set during the World Series this year. Of course, I live in New Jersey, so I was pretty close to the big New York battle. But often when I watch sports, I have moments when I step outside of myself and wonder exactly what it is that sports do for us. No doubt, they entertain. Sports remove the pointless, empty day-to-day existence from our minds and replace it with structure and something to look forward to. But is it more than that? I notice commentators kicking around the word *hero* as recklessly as the news media misuses the word *tragedy*. There must be some real heavy shit going down if so many heroes are emerging.

Many players certainly attain the rightful title of hero when they make philanthropic contributions to the communities that made them what they are. Selflessness and charity are virtues to be admired in any person. But does this exude from their accomplishments in the sports themselves, or from the players' use of their celebrity status with which they've been endowed by being fortunate enough to excel at these fabricated games? Essentially, are they heroes because they're good at a game, or because they have a generous spirit and the spoils of the sports world just gave them the means to contribute?

Before we label our sports figures as heroes and role models for our children, intense scrutiny should be placed upon their life off the field. Often shielded from general knowledge, the criminal background of sports players is quite disturbing. According to



Jim Edwards at APBnews.com (in a January 2000 article), 11% of the players in last year's Rams-Titans Superbowl have been convicted of crimes, including soliciting prostitutes, assault, and manslaughter. In addition, the 1998 book *Pros and Cons: The Criminals Who Play in the NFL* shows that 21 percent of all 1996-1997 NFL players had been arrested or indicted at some time in their life. In fact, when I typed the words "sports players arrested" into the Yahoo search engine, it returned 11,200 matches, offering pages and pages of incidents involving sports players. And that doesn't even cover all the illegitimate children fathered by NBA players.

I might be asking for too much, but this passionate love affair that the entire world has with sports must abate. I'm not calling for the destruction of sports, because I mentioned before that I enjoy being a spectator. We just have to lose the whole masculine, competitive "I refuse to lose" mindset, the corporate worship of it, and our opinion of it as the salvation for our children. The chances are very slim that any one child will be profound enough at any one

sport to go professional, and so a sports figure, leaving aside their lack of genuine heroism, is not necessarily someone that a child should emulate.

In the grand scheme of life, sports are an amusing diversion. But all too often they become a distraction, and a little bit larger than they deserve to be. Their brand of heroism is safe. It's cotton candy for the soul. It offers little for the advancement of human knowledge and feeling. Nothing is ventured, so nothing is truly gained.

That being said, I'm gonna go watch the rest of the Giants game now. ¶¶

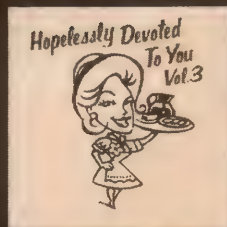
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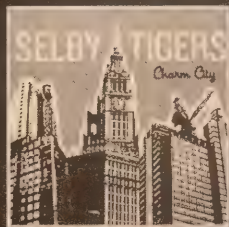


art by eric spittler





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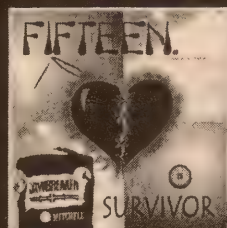
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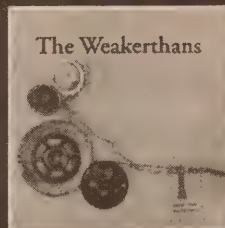
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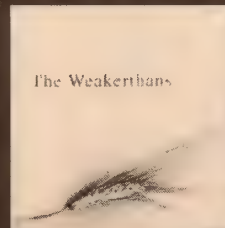
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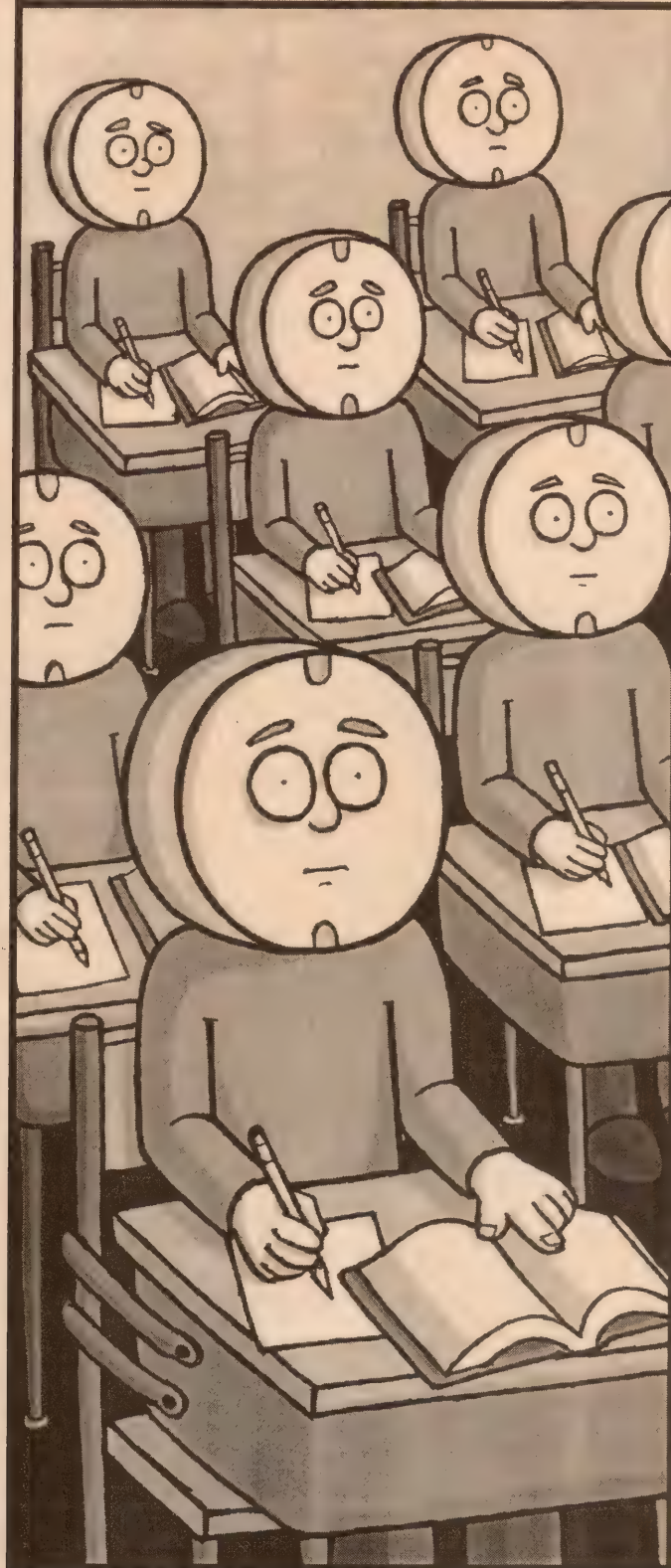
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# Have You Had Your Ritalin Today?

By Gemma Hughes

Art by Eric Spitler



**IN THE PAST**, society believed that the world was flat and that the sun revolved around the earth. Today we believe that the government knows what's best for us and that the drug Ritalin (Methylphenidate) is a cure for the brain disorders Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

The number of children diagnosed with ADD and ADHD has increased dramatically in the last decade, along with the prescription of Ritalin, the drug of choice supposed to treat these disorders. It is not uncommon to find 30% of a school's students taking Ritalin or other drugs that claim to treat ADHD (Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman, N.D., M.S.W., and Robert Ullman, N.D. *Ritalin Free Kids*).

I first became extremely suspicious of Ritalin and ADHD years ago when, as a tutor and child care giver, I noticed that the children diagnosed with ADHD were not inattentive at all, but were bright and enthusiastic if only given the opportunity to be so. Many of them were starved for attention and blossomed when given the one on one attention they craved. While many of them could not sit for long while doing math homework, for example, they were impossible to distract if given an art assignment or a difficult Lego to build. I noticed in these children the frustration experienced when, on their prescribed drug, usually Ritalin. The drugs caused terrible mood swings and made it difficult for these children to express themselves the way they knew how, creatively. I concluded that these children were creative and highly intelligent. They were not of the regular mold, but this is no reason to drug them into compliance.

The United States school system is designed to create good submissive employees, not great thinkers or artists. When a "difficult" child challenges this goal, drugs are recommended. I cannot advocate this habit. With such a dramatic increase in the diagnosis of ADHD and the prescription of Ritalin in the past ten years, one can't help but wonder if factors other than the mental health of America's children are to blame. We have in fact been victim to a greedy pharmaceutical company. Novartis has fraudulently promoted the diagnosis of ADHD in order to increase the sale of their drug, Ritalin.

According to "A.D.D - A Dubious Diagnosis," an investigative report on Ritalin and AD/HD produced by The Merrow Report and aired on PBS in 1995, an estimated 2,000,000 children in America are currently receiving medication as treatment for ADD or ADHD, most of whom receive Ritalin as treatment. Many more have been diagnosed with these disorders and are not taking medication. Both of these numbers are growing.



The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) lists the stimulant drug Ritalin (along with Morphine and Barbiturates) as a schedule II Drug, meaning that it has the highest potential for abuse of all legal drugs. Other drugs in this category include cocaine, metamphetamine and methadone. The DEA estimates that pharmaceutical companies earn \$450 million a year (maybe more) selling stimulant drugs, according to Lawrence H. Diller, M.D., in his 1998 book *Running On Ritalin*.

Dr. Peter R. Breggin, Psychiatrist and Director for the International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology in Bethesda, MD, asks "Does a drug become 'safe' simply because it is prescribed by a doctor? Does 'pushing' drugs on children become legitimate simply because it is done by drug manufacturers?" There is growing incidence of Ritalin abuse by school-aged children and college students, who use it as an all-night study aid. During my research, I read of two cases in the U.S. in the last five years in which a child died from snorting the powder of crushed Ritalin pills. A parent testimonial from the Parents Against Ritalin website puts it very well, "We as a nation are telling our children 'DARE' to say NO to drugs, but say 'okay' to Ritalin."

The proliferating diagnosis of ADHD and prescription of Ritalin is resulting in a growing number of critics. Many believe that ADHD isn't even a real disorder and that we are drugging our gifted and brightest, that we are ignoring those children who are signaling the need for a renaissance in our school system and hectic lifestyles that are not designed for the developing minds of our youth.

The diagnosis of ADHD usually begins at a young age in the classroom. Those children who do not do well in school and who display any of a number of criteria are recommended by their teachers for evaluation by a psychiatrist for ADHD. Criteria include: Failure to pay close attention to details; trouble keeping attention on tasks; not listening when being told something; failure to follow through on instructions; disliking or avoiding tasks that involve sustained mental effort (homework, schoolwork); squirming in seat or fidgeting; having trouble quietly playing or engaging in leisure activity; talking excessively; answering questions before they have been completely asked; interrupting – in other words, any symptom of boredom and frustration. In the words of pediatric neurologist Fred A. Baughman Jr., M.D., "What business does the U.S. Department of Education have encouraging (at the behest of CHADD-Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) the drugging of normal children who come to them not for psychology and psychiatry but for an education?"

These "symptoms are vague and open to interpretation," according to Diller (*Running On Ritalin*), "yet they lead to an all-or-nothing diagnosis." With such a large percentage of America's children being diagnosed with ADHD, there is, interestingly, no definitive test for the diagnosis of these disorders anywhere.

A recent study of one thousand U.S. classrooms conducted by John Goodland, Professor of Education at the University of Washington, concluded that school is boring. The study criticized the

lack of exciting learning activities. Studies of "ADHD students" suggest that they do their worst in activities that are boring and repetitive, externally controlled, and lack immediate feedback— in other words, activities of a typical school day. Many people are hands-on learners, have different learning styles, or can be suffering with environmental problems that affect learning. Gifted children become bored in school while waiting for other children to catch up, say James T. Webb and Diane Latimer in their 1993 article "ADHD and Children Who Are Gifted". At Cornell University, researchers found that "hyperactive" children can absorb information from several different sources at the same time and could learn better in environments that provide such stimulation.

According to Dr. Breggin, the "criteria" listed earlier for diagnosing ADHD, can result for any number of reasons "including a spirited creative nature that defies conformity, inconsistent discipline or lack of unconditional love, boring and oversized classrooms, and overstressed teacher, lack of teacher attention to individual educational needs, anxiety due to abuse or neglect at home or elsewhere, conflict and communication problems in family and misguided educational and behavioral expectations for the child." Quoting Richard De Grandpre from his book *Ritalin Nation* (New York: Norton and Co., 2000), "By interpreting any durable or enduring behavioral traits as the product of some singular inner biological cause...physicians overlook the possibility of a developmental problem. In doing this, psychiatrists are jettisoning what was once a core tenet of theirs: That family, social, and cultural problems often manifest themselves as psychological ones."

Albert Einstein, Thomas Alva Edison, Louis Pasteur, and Sir Isaac Newton all did terribly in school. Thank goodness we didn't drug them.

But with so many using Ritalin, it *must* be working. And since it's approved by the FDA and advocated so strongly by the organization CHADD, then it *must* be safe. Right?

**Okay, first thing's first. Does Ritalin work?**

Yes, Ritalin works. It works by suppressing all spontaneous activity and increasing obsessive-compulsive behaviors, thus improving attention and reducing activity. These effects, however, are witnessed in most people who take stimulants regardless of whether they are diagnosed with ADHD or not. This drug actually works by hindering higher brain function.

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**Albert Einstein,  
Thomas Edison,  
Louis Pasteur,  
and  
Isaac Newton  
all did terribly  
in school.  
Thank goodness  
we didn't  
drug them.**

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Many on Ritalin do notice a positive effect on school performance and grades. Twenty years of review studies on the effects of stimulant medication for ADHD, however, all conclude that positive effects of Ritalin are temporary.

The medical community, largely the APA (American Psychiatric Association), has been trying for decades to prove that ADHD is of biological origin, that it is caused by a dysfunction of the brain. They have yet to produce any evidence to support this hypothesis. In fact, the National Institute of Health (NIH) in 1998 and the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2000 confirmed that there is no known biological cause of ADHD and that any brain abnormalities found in these children are most likely caused by prior use of psychiatric medication.

Studies reported in the *Journal of Applied Behavior and Analysis* (vols. 8 & 15, 1975 and 1982 respectively) have shown that children taking Ritalin exhibit better behavior but at the expense of cognitive abilities. Those children who undergo non-drug "treatment" in which they are given more attention and whose lessons are geared to their own learning styles have an equally positive change in behavior as those on drug therapy but with no negative effects on cognitive abilities.

#### **Okay, second thing, is Ritalin safe?**

Well, here are the facts. Decide for yourself. The side effects that can be experienced on Ritalin are, from the PDR (Physician's Drug Reference) Nurses' Drug Handbook 2001 Edition: nervousness; insomnia; headaches; dizziness; drowsiness; chorea - nervous disorder resulting in body and facial tics; depressed mood; psychological dependence; heart palpitations; angina; hyper- or hypotension; nausea; anorexia; abdominal pain; weight loss; anxiety; tension; glaucoma - just to name a few. Ritalin can also retard growth of all organs of the body, including the brain. No studies exist on the irreversibility of these symptoms.

Of all the studies I have read that had positive results on the use of Ritalin, not one seemed legitimate. Political and economical factors were too prevalent among many studies, some of which were funded by pharmaceutical companies. Other studies claiming to be non-biased were conducted by panels of experts chosen by pro-Ritalin organizations, such as CHADD (Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder). A number of studies were under scrutiny by others in the research and psychiatry field

for the possibility of hiding, changing and controlling the data and results of their studies. Consider, also, a good point made by *Running On Ritalin*, "The people in medicine's academic circles who define disorders are inevitably influenced by the biases and sociopolitical interests of their time. For example, the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) classified homosexuality as a sexual disorder until 1974. The professionals who create or revise DSM categories are recruited by the American Psychiatric Association, and political considerations, as well as professional relationships and rivalries, inevitably enter into the selection process." Thus, the very book used to define disorders is biased - the very people who define the disorders are the ones who will be called upon to treat them.

Numerous cases exist in which parents have been forced by the school and courts to keep their child on Ritalin, being accused of child abuse and denied entry into the classroom if they refuse. A recent article from the *Times Union* in Albany, New York reported on a couple who are now listed in the state register of alleged child abusers. Their school administrators reported them to Child Protective Services when, due to concern for possible side effects, the parents decided to take their son off Ritalin.

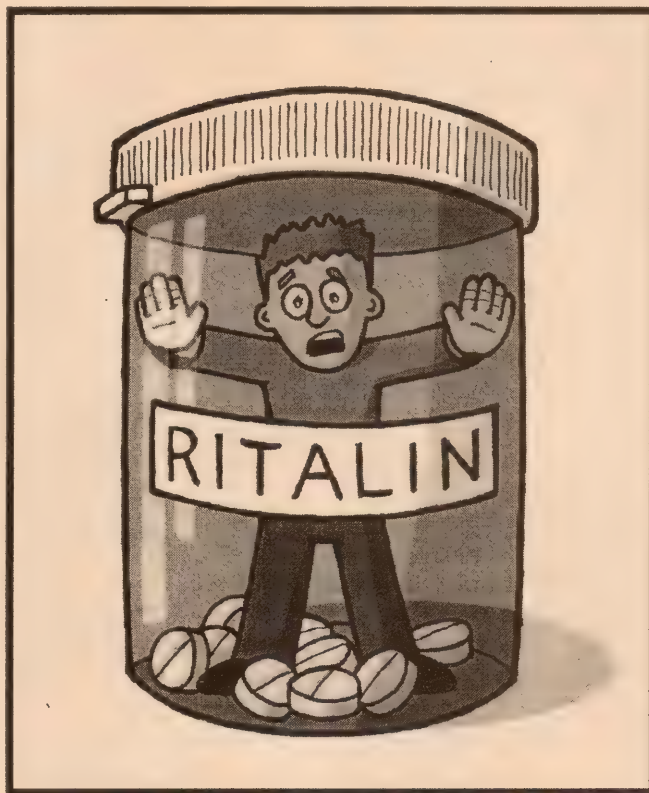
For the people who are being forced to drug their children and for those who think they have a brain disorder, when in fact they are perfectly normal, there is hope! Recent events are coming to their aid and are creating a credible defense for those of us who are anti-Ritalin.

In Colorado, the Board of Education passed a resolution discouraging teachers from recommending medical evaluations for ADHD and treatment with Ritalin.

Under scrutiny for the large number of pre-school aged children who are taking Ritalin, the Federal Government is funding a \$5 million research project to study children who are taking Ritalin. And four major civil suits have recently been brought against Novartis, the producer of Ritalin.

The suits charge Novartis with the fraudulent promotion and diagnosis of ADD and ADHD in order to increase the market (and thus, the sales) of its drug Ritalin. From the website [ritalinfraud.com](http://ritalinfraud.com), Novartis is charged with:

1. Actively promoting and supporting the concept that a significant percentage of children suffer from a "disease" which required narcotic treatment/therapy;





# Some Little-Known Facts About Ritalin

- Should be discontinued at puberty (*PDR Nurses Drug Handbook 2001.*)
- Safety and efficacy in children less than six years of age have not been established (*PDR Nurses Handbook 2001.*)
- Long-term effects have not been established, yet Ritalin is typically a long-term treatment for ADHD (Dr. Peter R. Breggin, Dir., Intl. Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology).
- Recent animal testing has found that Ritalin might cause cancer (DeGrandpre, *Ritalin Nation*).
- Ritalin frequently causes the very problems it is supposed to treat (Breggin).
- Virginia has the highest per capita use of Ritalin in the U.S. followed by S. Carolina, Delaware (Diller, *Running On Ritalin*).
- The United States produces and consumes approximately 90% of the worlds Ritalin (Breggin).
- There has been a 700% increase in the use of Ritalin since 1991 (Diller, *Running On Ritalin*).
- Boys are diagnosed with ADHD 3 to 5 times more often than girls (DeGrandpre, *Ritalin Nation*).
- Problems of the ADHD diagnosed person are situation specific (Breggin).
- Approximately 95% of children with ADHD will have been diagnosed by the age of six, (Patricia O. Quinn, M.D. *Attention Deficit Disorder Diagnosis and Treatment From Infancy to Adulthood.*) during a developmental stage characterized by restlessness and testing boundaries of authority.

2. Actively promoting Ritalin as the "drug of choice" to treat children diagnosed with ADD and ADHD:

3. Actively supporting groups such as Defendant CHADD, both financially and with other means, so that such organizations would promote and support (as a supposed neutral party) the ever-increasing implementation of ADD/ADHD diagnoses as well as directly increasing Ritalin sales;

4. Distributing misleading sales and promotional literature to parents, schools and other interested persons in a successful effort to further increase the number of diagnoses and the number of persons prescribed Ritalin.

I am not suggesting that all children diagnosed with ADHD have nothing wrong with them; many medical conditions can cause the symptoms listed above. But be wary and take into consideration the fraudulent actions of those who profit most from the ADHD diagnosis and from Ritalin consumption.

Consider that most people diagnosed with ADHD have nothing wrong with them at all; that, in fact, they have been victims of the fraudulent plans of a greedy pharmaceutical company all along.

Be warned that Ritalin is not the only treatment for ADHD; Dexedrine and other amphetamines can be prescribed. Don't allow physicians and pharmaceutical companies to continue to drug our children. From here on, rule out the possibility of ADHD and consider instead allergies and dietary problems like too much sugar. Consider the lack of adequate attention, boring classes, or that your child's strengths lie in more creative areas.

The past decade has witnessed a proliferation of hate crimes committed by minors. It has also seen a huge increase in the diagnosis of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and the prescription of psychiatric drugs to treat these disorders. As DeGrandpre points out in the book *Ritalin Nation*, several of the

adolescents responsible for the school shootings of the late 1990's had been prescribed psychiatric drugs, including Ritalin, prior to these incidents. If these drugs were the cure for the so-called disorders these children were suffering from, we need to question what side-effects these same drugs cause that may lead to such violent actions. Perhaps they suffered from no disorder that could be treated with drugs. Perhaps they were a result of society – a society that has no time for its young, a society that would rather feed its youth mind-altering psychiatric drugs than look itself in the face and admit that a long needed change is in order.

Maybe it's time to start pointing the finger...at each other, at our failing school system, at a medical system that sees no problem with unnecessarily drugging our youth and at ourselves as parents, siblings and neighbors who don't make time for the people who need our time the most. When we allow pharmaceutical companies to feed us lies, without question, about what is best for OUR children, let them profit at OUR expense, then we shed our role as care givers and pass that responsibility to companies like Novartis. We cannot trust the agencies and organizations designed to protect us from harm; we must educate ourselves and always question, because there are other companies ready to take the place of Novartis and profit at our expense, whatever that may be. ❧

## Make an IMPACT

Parents Against Ritalin  
<http://www.p-a-r.org>

Ritalin Fraud  
<http://www.ritalinfraud.com>

Peter R. Breggin, M.D.  
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FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN READING THIS STRIP OVER THE YEARS, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED THAT I BELONG TO A PARTICULAR MINORITY GROUP...

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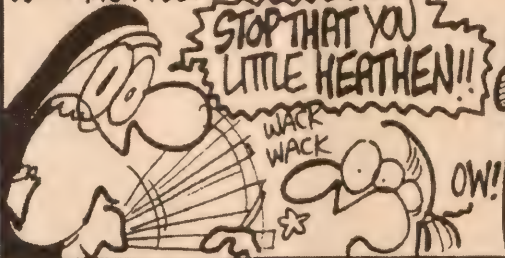


**MORE WHINING FROM THE LEFT**

**A K CHRONICLES EDITORIAL** BY KEITH KNIGHT

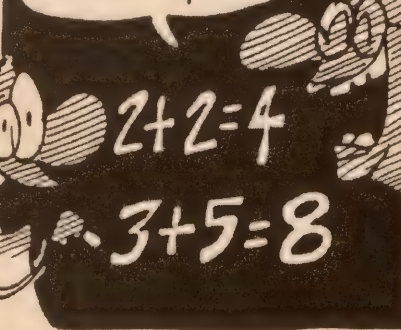
IT AIN'T EASY LIVING IN A RIGHT SOCIETY...

A LOT OF OLDER FOLKS WILL TELL YOU HOW NUNS USED TO WHACK THEIR HAND WITH A RULER IF THEY TRIED TO WRITE WITH THEIR LEFT ONE...



TO BE 'RIGHT' IN THIS WORLD IS TO BE 'CORRECT'.

Why.. That's right, Paul.. An A for you!!

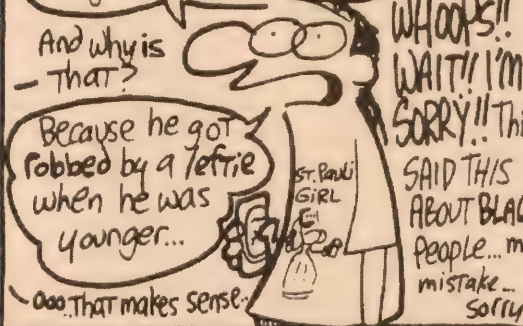


WHILE THE WORD "LEFT" IS OFTEN USED IN A NEGATIVE CONTEXT...



SOMEBODY REALLY SAID THIS TO ME WHEN I WAS IN COLLEGE.. I SWEAR!!

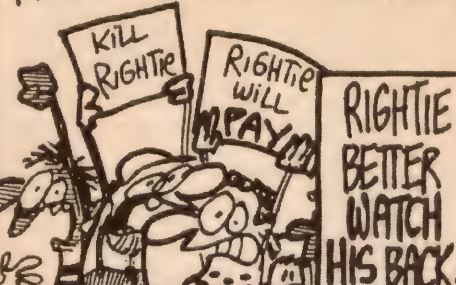
Keith.. I have an Uncle who HATES left-handed people.. but he's got a legitimate reason to...



THE RIGHT MAN IS ALWAYS COMPLAINING THAT WE GET SPECIAL TREATMENT...



WELL MR. RIGHT MAN... MANY OF US AREN'T GOING TO TAKE IT ANYMORE.. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.. THIS COUNTRY DON'T NEED NO MORE STINKIN' RIGHTS..



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# Trading with the Enemy:

## Why is the U.S. Courting One Communist Country While Destroying Another?

By Craig Butler

The U.S. decision to grant Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status with China represents yet another step toward "normalizing" relations with that country. Both the Clinton Administration and Congress support opening up economic relations, despite the fact that critics of China's human rights, environmental and labor abuses maintain that economic strictures are the only weapon we have to force change in these areas.

The Clinton Administration has long dismissed such protests. As Alan Larson, Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, said in 1997, isolating China economically would only "strengthen the hand of those within the Chinese leadership who oppose reform. We support China's full integration into, and active participation in, the international community (and) we regard dialogue and engagement as the best way to manage our differences." Or, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright explained during testimony before the Senate Committee on Finance on PNTR in July 1998, "It would be irresponsible for us not to have a multifaceted relationship with China at this point."

Yet the U.S. does not have the same point of view with regard to its nearest Communist neighbor, Cuba. Our official policy (as put forth by the U.S. State Department) "is to promote a peaceful transition to a stable, democratic form of government (by) maintaining pressure on the Cuban government for change through the embargo and the Libertad Act...We oppose consideration of Cuba's return to the Organization of American States or inclusion in the Summit of the Americas' process until there is a democratic government." The result of this policy has been an impoverishment of the Cuban people due to the severe economic hardships imposed by the 40-year-long embargo. (Under the embargo, the U.S. restricts economic and other access to Cuba for Americans; the Libertad, or Helms-Burton Act, attempts to forbid other countries from doing business with Cuba.)

"The Administration's idea that we must maintain the embargo in place in order to pressure Cuba to move toward democracy and respect for human rights is totally wrong," says Wayne S. Smith, Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana from 1979-1982. "As many dissidents in Cuba point out, the more we pressure, the more defensive the Cuban government becomes and the less propitious the atmosphere for positive change. We could do far more to encourage the kind of liberalization the American people want to see by easing tension, beginning a dialogue with the Cu-

ban government and moving to dismantle the embargo."

Smith was somewhat encouraged by recent legislation allowing the sale of certain U.S. products (mostly agricultural) to Cuba. "I think the step in Congress partially to open up to the sale of foods and medicines, even though the measure was largely emasculated by the Republican leadership, reflects a trend," he states.

Thomas Donohue, President and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, agrees. "It's time for the U.S. to wake up to reality - unilateral sanctions don't work," he stated in October. "Instead of punishing our enemies, unilateral sanctions isolate America from its allies, provide ammunition to dictators to prop up their regimes, and shut out U.S. companies and their workers from markets around the world...We must remember that when we trade with other nations, we not only export our goods and services, we also export American ideals of freedom, democracy and free enterprise."

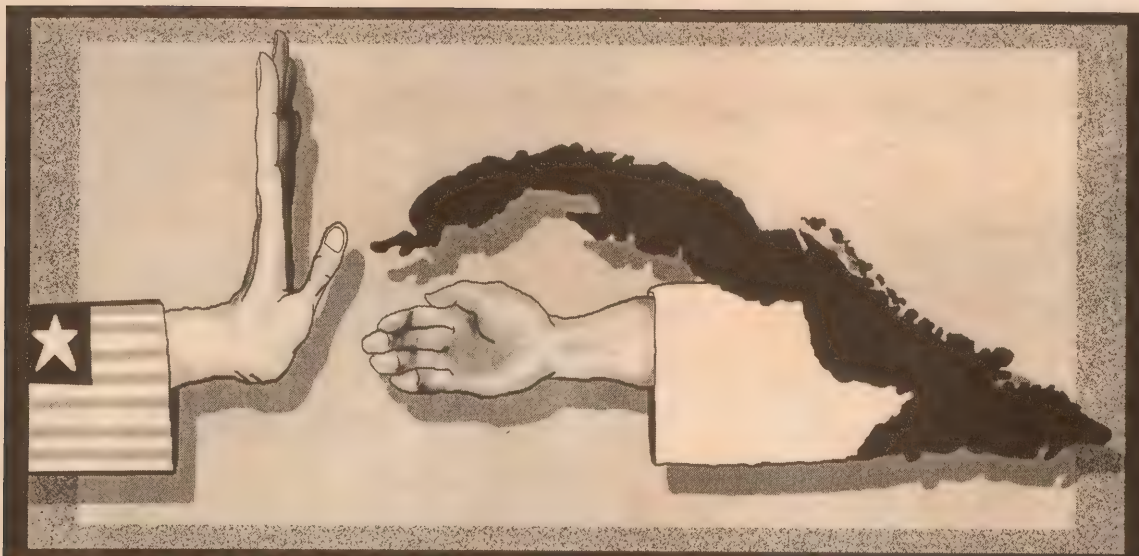
Unlike the U.S. government, the Chamber of Commerce maintains a consistent policy toward both Cuba and China. Their philosophy is summed up in Donohue's statement that "around the world, increased trade raises living standards, opens up closed societies, and generates the wealth needed to pay for social programs." Indeed, the Chamber of Commerce was one of the biggest proponents of establishing PNTR with China, stating that it is "in America's best economic and national security interests."

Many non-profit organizations also question the inconsistent economic policy toward these two nations. Bob Boehm, Co-Chair of the Fund for New Priorities in America, states that "the contrast between the treatment of Cuba and that of China is extreme. The arguments favoring the embargo have been demolished on all sides. We advocate the total abolition of the embargo and all its oppressive and anti-human aspects."

"We oppose economic blockades in favor of inclusive policies, such as constructive dialogue, for as many countries as possible," says Mary Day Kent, president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which favors lifting the Cuba embargo. "However, we feel that the issue of China is a very complex one."

It is that complexity which causes many environmental and human rights groups to oppose the PNTR decision. As Friends of the Earth President Brent Blackwelder explains, "This agreement addresses tariffs for everything from golf carts to weasel tail hair, yet





art by eachman

manages to completely ignore the air and water we depend upon for survival."

"When American businesses look to China," says Joan Claybrook, President of Public Citizen, "they see dollar signs. They ignore the misery brought by China's continued human rights violations and inhumane treatment of workers."

Labor organizations, not surprisingly, agree with that statement and pushed hard against PNTR. "Congress had a chance to stand up for the brutally oppressed workers in China and the hundreds of thousands of U.S. manufacturing workers who will lose their jobs because of increased imports from the sweatshops of China," said Steelworkers President George Becker after the House voted in favor of PNTR. "Instead, it turned its back on Chinese and American workers."

"Proponents claim that the trade deal will lead to a more free and open Chinese society and benefit American workers as well," scoffed Stephen Yorkich, President of the United Auto Workers, going on to insist that President Clinton "demonstrate his commitment to human and workers' rights by demanding that the Chinese government immediately free the thousands of Chinese citizens who today are in prison cells for the 'crime' of trying to form free trade unions."

And in a report entitled "Made in China: The Role of U.S. Companies in Denying Human and Worker Rights," the National Labor Committee disputes claims that the mere presence of corporations in China would help open that society to American values, charging instead that Wal-Mart, Nike and others "systematically violate the most fundamental human and worker rights, while paying below subsistence wages" and asking how such behavior is

"spreading respect for human rights". The report cites examples of factories making American products where employees are expected to work 12-14 hour days, often seven days a week, for wages as low as 3 cents an hour. In one case, any employee who refuses to work overtime is automatically docked the equivalent of two days' wages.

Of course, Fidel Castro is not exactly a posterboy for human rights, although exactly how bad he is depends upon whom you ask. Retiring Florida Senator Connie Mack has called him a tyrant, and Florida's other Senator, Bob Graham, thinks that the human rights situation under Castro "is worse than that halfway around the world in China." (Both of these Senators, by the way, voted for PNTR with China.)

Noam Chomsky, on the other hand, has termed Castro's regime "brutal, though a teddy bear in comparison with numerous U.S. friends and clients." Others point out the positive results of Castro's rule, including a 98% literacy rate, universal day care and health care, and free education through graduate school.

In a recent editorial, former California Governor Jerry Brown wrote that "political maturity demands that the U.S. exercise its capacity to trade and coexist with nations of whose systems it does not approve." He also reminded readers that almost two decades ago, the U.S. promised it would lift the embargo if Castro fulfilled 3 requirements, which he did. The U.S. response, however, was not to lift the embargo but to tighten it through the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act in 1996.

In contrast, Public Citizen (an organization started in 1971 by Ralph Nader to help protect and inform consumers) has pointed out that since the Senate granted PNTR, China has intensified its vicious

**"When American businesses look to China," says Joan Claybrook, President of Public Citizen, "they see dollar signs. They ignore the misery brought by China's continued human rights violations and inhumane treatment of workers."**





crackdown on the Falun Gong (an ancient spiritual practice), tightened its anti-free-speech control over the Internet, refused to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (an informal export control arrangement involving 32 countries striving to stem the spread of ballistic and cruise missiles), clamped down on freedom of the press, and charged the Pope with "severe crimes" for canonizing Chinese Catholics. There has been little official U.S. protest to these actions.

So why the disparity in the manner in which we treat these two Communist countries?

"American officials are more willing to normalize relations with China because China is a huge, irresistible market," says Wayne Smith (Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana from 1979-1982), "while Cuba represents a market of only 11 million souls. If Cuba had a population of 100 million, there would be no embargo against Cuba and would not have been one for years." Still, Smith believes that, despite its smaller size, the Cuban market could be valuable to America. "Obviously, the U.S. is Cuba's natural market, and they, one of ours. The U.S. could sell at least 3 to 4 billion dollars a year of commodities to Cuba were the embargo lifted."

Unfortunately, there's another reason beyond the sizes of the markets that explains the difference in our relations with Cuba and China. "The hard-line Cuban exiles give generously to the campaign funds of our leading politicians," Smith points out. "There is no such Chinese-American lobby trying to prevent normalization with China by pouring money into the coffers of our politicians."

Or, to put it a different way, it's another example of the political Golden Rule: He who has -and, more importantly, gives - the gold, makes the rules.

According to Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch project, corporations spent a record \$113 million to pass PNTR (as compared with slightly over \$30 million to get NAFTA through the process). "Big business is buying democracy one star off the flag at a time," Wallach notes, "and many in Congress are selling." Sometimes corporate efforts were nothing less than blatant; Rep. Merrill Cook (R-Utah) reported that he was offered \$200,000 to change his "no" vote on PNTR to "yes." Wallach called the PNTR vote "a case study of the corrosive effect money can have on the political process."

President Clinton also did a little Congressional bribing himself, twisting the arms of lawmakers by offering pork barrel deals, such as environmental approval for a controversial, environmentally dangerous pipeline in Texas and promises to build weather stations and extend military contracts in target members' congressional districts. Clinton, of course, has numerous financial ties to business interests in China. For example, Pauline Kanchanalak (a wealthy Thai businesswoman), who famously brought representatives of the largest foreign investor in China to meet with President Clinton, gave close to \$400,000 to the Democratic National Committee from 1993-1996.

While interested parties have been expending enormous sums of money to get us into China, equally interested parties are expend-

**"American officials are more willing to normalize relations with China because China is a huge, irresistible market, while Cuba represents a market of only 11 million souls," says Wayne Smith (former Chief of U.S. Interests Section in Havana).**



**No matter where one stands on either China or Cuba, one should be outraged that a small group of people are dictating foreign policy for the entire nation and are able to do so largely because of their access to large sums of money.**

ing similar sums to keep us out of Cuba. As veteran journalist Harley Sorensen has noted, "Our Cuban policy is all about money." Most of that money comes from two sometimes-overlapping groups: anti-Castro Cuban-Americans and the sugar industry.

For decades, a relatively small group of anti-Castro exiles - most notably the family of the late Jorge Mas Canosa, which runs the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and its Free Cuba political action committee - have held hostage American policy toward Cuba. Indeed, the 1992 Cuba Democracy Act was passed because then-candidate Bill Clinton desperately wanted to win Florida. His support for the bill, for which he was rewarded with \$300,000 from CANF, pressured President Bush to throw his support behind it and ensure its passage.

Free Cuba has been giving generously to both parties for years, of course. In 1997-98, for example, Free Cuba gave soft money donations of \$53,500 to the Democrats, \$49,000 to the Republicans. They have donated generously to a wide range of individual elected officials, including Representative Patrick Kennedy and Senator Henry Reid. And in 2000, prior to his nomination as vice president, they gave a whopping \$10,000 to longtime-ally Joseph Lieberman.

Dan Burton, the Congressional sponsor of the notorious Helms-Burton Act, is a particular favorite of Cuban-American donors. The Indiana representative receives only 14% of campaign contributions from interests in his own state. The remaining 84% comes from a variety of out-of-state concerns with the Cuban-American community accounting for a full 25% of his hefty campaign warchest.

As for Senator Jesse Helms, the Senatorial sponsor of that bill, "Helms gets big time sugar money, as well as a lot of tobacco and liquor money," Sorensen notes, explaining that U.S. interests do not want to compete with sugar, tobacco and rum from other countries - such as Cuba. And of that triumvirate, sugar is the one with the most to lose to Cuba. Over a 20-year period, the sugar industry pumped \$1.5 million into the pockets of current members of the House and Senate committees that oversee agricultural issues. In return, U.S. policy keeps sugar prices artificially high for consumers - about 8 cents above the world market price.

The Fanjul family, who were forced under Castro to leave Cuba, own the huge Flo-Sun Sugar Company in Florida. They make some \$60 million extra per year because of that price support, and they aim to keep that by providing funding to both political parties. Indeed, Alfonso Fanjul was Clinton's campaign co-chair in Florida in 1992, while his brother Pepe was on Dole's Florida finance committee in 1996. They make sure that, no matter who wins, they have a sympathetic ear for their concerns about Cuba.

And so we continue to close the door on Cuba and open it to China.

"The Senate vote on PNTR is a victory for common sense and thoughtful judgment," Robert Kapp, President of the U.S.-China Business Council, said this year. One can certainly argue with that position, but if one accepts it - as our elected officials have visibly done - there is absolutely no logical justification for continuing the Cuba embargo.

Conversely, a case can be made that demanding a consistent trade policy toward China and Cuba tries to force a "one size fits all" solution to complex problems. There is, of course, a world of difference between imposing conditional restrictions upon trade with a country with the goal of improving the conditions of the people who live there and imposing a total blockade the purpose of which is the removal of the head of state and the result of which is the decimation of the living standards for the people who live there.

So no matter where one stands on granting PNTR to China, our policy toward Cuba makes no sense.

Equally important, no matter where one stands on either China or Cuba, one should be outraged that a small group of people are dictating foreign policy for the entire nation and are able to do so largely because of their access to large sums of money. In the case of Cuba, there are other reasons, of course, including presidential candidates' willingness to do anything to gain Florida's 25 electoral votes. But money is still the overriding factor.

It's a disheartening story, but until such time as we get legitimate campaign finance reform, it will be a familiar one. In the meantime, it's up to us to fight back, by making our feelings on these issues known to elected officials - and by doing everything we can to defeat officials who listen to the soothing sound of greenbacks rather than the voices of the people they are elected to represent.

Give 'em hell. It's the only way. ☐☐

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# DID JESUS EXIST. . .

by  
Gary  
Sloan



. . . AND  
DOES IT MATTER ○

art by eachan



**TO TACKLE THE FIRST HALF OF THE QUESTION FIRST**, the answer depends on whom you ask. Most Americans will answer with a resounding yes. To get a no, you must turn to a small contingent of renegade scholars, their adherents, or a few crackpots who like to sound outrageous. The question may also be greeted by an occasional indifferent shrug.

According to recent surveys reported in *Newsweek* and *Time Almanac* 1999, 85% of Americans call themselves Christians. Of these, 75% (nearly 65% of all Americans) believe Jesus was God incarnate, that he was born of a virgin, died on the cross for the sins of our species, and was resurrected on the third day. They believe God assumed a human guise for about 33 years, talked, walked, slept, and ate in Palestine some 2000 years ago. They merge the "historical" Jesus with the biblical Jesus—the divine Redeemer, the Messiah, depicted in the New Testament. Unlike the Gnostics, an early Christian sect that considered Jesus an illusory wraith who only seemed to have been crucified, orthodox believers eschew a Jesus-Lite, some incorporeal emanation from on high or mythic symbol of the eternal Way. Only a god who deigned to bleed, sweat, and weep can offer the empathetic understanding and tangible satisfactions they seek.

The remaining 10% of Americans who call themselves Christians are considered "liberal" Christians. They don't believe Jesus was God. They view him, rather, as a human paragon of moral virtue whom they should emulate. As do many orthodox Christians, liberals are prone to ignore, or dismiss as inauthentic, those biblical utterances by Jesus that contradict his image of charitableness, forbearance, and compassion. Most non-Christians also believe that the biblical Jesus reflects an historical prototype. By and large, the world entertains a hefty respect for the Prince of Peace. Like the Muslims, some consider him a prophet of the Almighty.

In their perception of Jesus, a large rift exists between the average layperson and biblical scholars. Aside from a comparatively small band of evangelical theologians, most scholars reject the divinity of Jesus. Some, in fact, are agnostics or atheists. (I'll long remember the crestfallen look of a pious student when I told him the faculty of a divinity school he planned to attend included a large number of avowed atheists.) Many scholars envision little similarity between the Jesus of the canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and the supposed historical model. In the book *The Five Gospels* (edited by Robert Walter Funk) (the fifth is the non-canonical Thomas), based on the work of the Jesus Seminar, which brought together a group of biblical scholars, concludes that only 18% of the words attributed to Jesus by the Evangelists, the anonymous authors of the Gospels, were actually issued from his mouth. The Gospel of John they throw out altogether, and only a single sentence from Mark makes the cut. They gut the Sermon

on the Mount, and everything that smacks of miracle or magic gets the heave-ho: the Annunciation, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, walking on water, the temptation by Satan, the feeding of the multitude, etc. (Thomas Jefferson would have applauded this rife expurgation of preternatural elements. He constructed his own version of the Gospels cleansed of the occult and supernatural.)

The Jesus Seminar views the biblical Jesus as a patchwork accretion of legend, fantasy, surmise, and creative engineering that evolved from a few slivers of biographical truth. The construction work was already well advanced in various oral traditions before anything was written down. From these traditions and a few rudimentary compilations of sayings and acts of Jesus, the Evangelists culled what suited their purposes and tricked out the material with their own embellishments and innovations. They might import an incident from the life of some mythic or real hero, put into Jesus' mouth some doctrine espoused by their own sect, or impute to Jesus a background, character, and deeds consistent with Old Testament predictions (or what they thought were such) about the Messiah. The Evangelists were not averse to imaginative glosses on Old Testament passages. Matthew, for example, transformed a "young woman" who would bear a child (Isaiah 7:14) into a virgin who would bear Jesus and converted a prophecy about

**Wells, Professor Emeritus of German at the University of London, has propounded the thesis that the Jesus of the Gospels is a late first-century fabrication, devised some forty to eighty years after the time of his supposed death.**

Israel (Hosea 11:1) into a prophecy about Jesus. In light of the dense encrustation of artifice and myth surrounding Jesus, the eminent theologian Rudolph Bultmann groused in 1926: "We can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus." The minimalist Jesus served up by contemporary scholarship validates Bultmann's skepticism.

The line between a minimalist Jesus and no Jesus is razor thin. For a century and a half, some scholars have taken the final step. Those who have denied existence to an historical Jesus include Bruno Bauer, Robert Taylor, Joseph Wheless, John Robertson, Arthur Drews, Peter Jensen, Gordon Rylands, P. L. Couchoud, Guy Fau, and George A. Wells. Viewing the biblical Jesus as a pastiche woven from stories of various pagan gods, demigods, and heroes adapted to a first-century Jewish milieu, many scholars have noted striking similarities between Jesus and his pagan counterparts. For example, the Persian sun-god Mithra, widely worshipped in the Roman Empire before the inception of the Christian era, had 12 disciples, performed miracles, was buried in a tomb, rose on the third day, was called the Good Shepherd, identified with the lamb, considered "the Way, the Truth and the Light, the Redeemer, the Savior, the Messiah," his principal festival was



held on what was to become Easter, and he instituted a Eucharist or Lord's Supper. When Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire in 313 C.E. (Common Era), he was influenced by the pell-mell conversion of Roman soldiers from Mithraism to Christianity. The biblical Jesus gave them a sort of home-grown Mithra.

Among contemporary scholars who deny an historical Jesus, George A. Wells is the best known and the most formidable. In six carefully reasoned, heavily annotated books *The Jesus of the Early Christians*, *Did Jesus Exist?*, *The Historical Evidence for Jesus*, *Who Was Jesus?*, *The Jesus Legend*, *The Jesus Myth*), Wells, Professor Emeritus of German at the University of London, has propounded the thesis that the Jesus of the Gospels is a late first-century fabrication, devised some forty to eighty years after the time of his supposed death. Wells, magnanimous indeed, doesn't accuse the Evangelists of conscious duplicity. In Palestine, in the first-century C.E., Messiahs were a dime a dozen. By the time the Evangelists took up their quills, vague reports about sundry Messiahs had been conflated as episodes in the life of a crucified savior called Jesus, then a common name. In the early phases of the developing myth, details about his life and death were hazy. Later, the Evangelists would naturally suppose he was crucified when Pontius Pilate was the prefect of Judea (26 C.E. - 36 C.E.) since Pilate was infamous for his ruthless rule of Judea. The Evangelists amplified the sketchy reports they had heard by attributing to Jesus maxims, doctrines, actions, and a history befitting a Jewish Messiah.

Wells demonstrates that St. Paul, who wrote several (probably eight) New Testament epistles to various churches between 45 C.E. and 60 C.E., knew next to nothing about the Jesus described in the Gospels because the "facts" about him therein recorded had not yet been devised. (The earliest of the Gospels, Mark, was written no earlier than 70 C. E. and possibly as late as 90 C.E.). Paul's Jesus is a shadowy figure invoked by Christians before the Gospels fleshed him out. Paul's Jesus had died for people's sins, was resurrected, briefly appeared to a few witnesses, and would soon return to judge the living and the dead. Paul associated Jesus with the Wisdom figure of Jewish literature. In that tradition, Wisdom is represented as a supernatural being made by God before he made heaven and earth. According to Wells, Wisdom "is the sustainer and governor of the universe who comes to dwell among men and bestow her gifts on them, but most of them reject her; after being humiliated on earth, Wisdom returned to heaven."

Wells also demonstrates that the only first-century references to Jesus are in Christian sources. Many Christian theologians con-

tend that the following passage in *Antiquities of the Jews*, written by the Jewish historian Josephus in 94 C.E., confirms the existence of Jesus since it provides independent testimony:

"About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth of the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them re-

stored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared."

Wells shows that the passage wasn't written by Josephus, but was added in the fourth century, probably by the church father Eusebius. No one before him quotes the passage, though second and third-century Christian scholars knew the Josephus book well. Had they known of the passage, they would have quoted it in their theological disputes with the Jews. Wells also points out that the passage interrupts the narrative flow of Josephus' text and that it absurdly imputes to Josephus, an orthodox Jew, the sentiments of a devout Christian.

Having read all Wells' books and many responses to them, I, personally, am convinced that, if an historical Jesus did exist, we know nothing about him. Now, turning to the second half of the titular question, does it really matter whether Jesus was a real person?

To liberal Christians, viewing Jesus as but a moral exemplar, not a god, it shouldn't make any difference. Nothing about his teachings is unique or distinctive. All the moral principles the biblical Jesus lays

down were commonplace long before he uttered them. According to the historian Joseph McCabe in *The Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*, "The sentiments attributed to Christ are in the Old Testament. They were familiar in the Jewish schools and to all the Pharisees, long before the time of Christ, as they were familiar in all the civilizations of the earth—Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian, Greek, and Hindu." The famous Golden Rule, which many associate with Jesus, was advocated by Confucius 500 years earlier and then later, long before the Gospels were concocted, by Hillel, a Pharisee (a member of an ancient Jewish sect). Hillel wrote: "What thou dost not like, do thou not to thy neighbor. That is the whole; all the rest is explanation." One of Jesus' signature commandments—"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"—is cribbed verbatim from Leviticus 19:18 in the Old Testament.





By diminishing the Jesus factor in their moral computations, liberal Christians would derive some gratuitous benefits. They would no longer have to blink at or rationalize the unsavory side of the biblical Jesus: his insistence on eternal damnation, his enmity toward those with beliefs different from his own, his anti-intellectualism, and his dictatorial mode of instruction.

As for the nearly 65% of Americans who think God incarnated himself in an historical Jesus, most would be devastated to discover that Jesus never existed. Their belief in Jesus gives them an indefatigably sympathetic confidant, assuages their fear of death and bereavement, wards off existential angst, assures cosmic purpose, and aligns them with the good guys. So handsome are the psychological pay-offs of belief that many, perhaps most, devout orthodox Christians are impervious to all countervailing logic and evidence. Their will to believe vanquishes every disquieting fact, every contrary line of reasoning, no matter how compelling to an impartial eye. Psychologists have a frightening arsenal of terms for the mental habits designed to preserve cherished beliefs: dissociation, absolutist thinking, dichotomization, object permanence, nominal realism, phenomenalist causality and worse.

**As for the nearly 65% of Americans who think God incarnated himself in an historical Jesus, most would be devastated to discover that Jesus never existed.**

A few years ago, I got a crash course in the mental ploys believers use to sustain faith in the reality of Jesus. In 1996, in a series of letters to the *Shreveport Times* and the *Monroe News-Star*, the largest newspapers in north Louisiana, I presented a detailed exposition of George Wells' thesis that the historical Jesus is purely mythic. The letters elicited over 100 responses, about three-fourths published and the rest sent to my home. With few exceptions, the respondents skirted the substantive issues Wells raised. Many launched ad hominem attacks on me. Here are some of the evasive tactics they used:

**Accused me of hypocrisy:** "It seems the wacky writings of Gary Sloan, belittling and mocking Christians, are endless. In a country where liberals incessantly preach 'tolerance,' it is amusing how truly intolerant he is of Christians."

**Reprimanded me:** "I fail to understand why Mr. Sloan enjoys and is proud of condemning holy things. Is it just that misery loves company?"

**Ridiculed me:** "Here's Sloan again, with his copious babble, confirming his brilliance and superiority over all of us dumb Christians, telling the world how we don't know doodly-squat about Jesus. Until now, the world has lived in ignorance. Hail, the bringer of light! Mr. Sloan, read Proverbs 14:2 and may Jesus bless you."

**Demonized me:** "There are people who enjoy doing evil things. Sloan takes delight in trying to destroy people's belief in Jesus. When I read his letters, I can just see an evil Satan sitting there writing the letter. The master spirit of evil is using Sloan's body."

**Described my future:** "I shudder to think of the fate that awaits this foolish Enemy of God. It looks like Sloan wants the whole enchilada—death, followed by the White Throne judgment, humiliation, condemnation, then thrown into the bottomless pit by an archangel with an attitude, to swim around in burning fire with his master,

the devil, for eternity."

**Pitied me:** "I don't disdain Mr. Sloan. I see him as someone searching and someone Jesus hasn't given up on. I pray this poor, confused soul will accept his Savior someday."

**Thanked me:** "Does Sloan realize that with each letter he writes, he draws Christians even closer to Christ? As a believer in Jesus, I want him to know that with each letter, he strengthens my faith."

**Invited me to church:** "Like a lot of others, I've been reading the letters about Jesus written by Gary Sloan. People keep telling him he's wrong, but I haven't seen one person invite him to church. So I would like to extend him a personal invitation to visit our small Baptist church this Sunday."

**Stigmatized the intellect:** "Mr. Sloan will never find Jesus with his mind and intellect. 'Professing themselves wise, they become fools.' He will find him with his heart and spirit, or he will never find him."

**Reviewed orthodox doctrine:** "Jesus was not only real, he was holy when implanted in Mary's womb and was holy when Mary delivered him. Jesus was never just man. He never gave up his holy nature. The fact that Jesus is God is proven by his resurrection from the dead. Nothing

Sloan or Wells can say will change the facts."

**Affirmed their conviction:** "Sloan doesn't understand that there is no argument he (or Wells) can make, no power he can bring to bear that will make us change our mind. We're going to see our loved ones, we're going to see Jesus."

Not all my respondents can be dismissed as Bible-Belt fundamentalists or uneducated rubes. The respondents included lawyers, physicians, bankers, journalists, and university professors. So, once again, does it matter whether Jesus existed? Obviously, for many Christians, it matters immensely. And, as the above responses indicate, true believers aren't about to be seduced by the facts. ❧

(Gary Sloan is a retired English professor from Ruston, Louisiana. He has written articles on Christianity for *Free Inquiry*, *The Skeptic*, *The Humanist*, *American Atheist*, *The Freethinker*, *Freethought Today*, *Exquisite Corpse*, *The American Rationalist*, and other magazines.)

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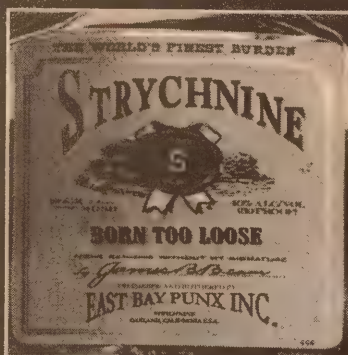
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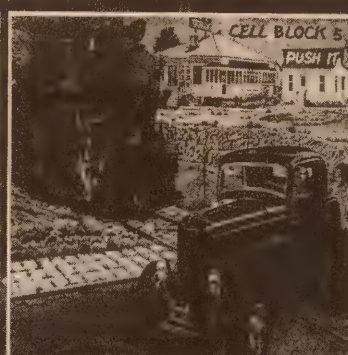
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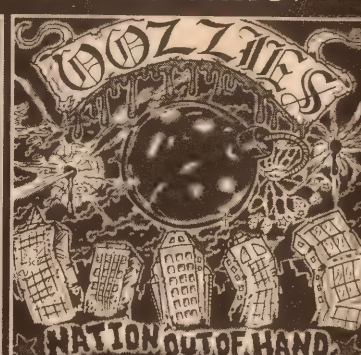
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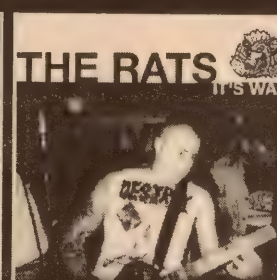
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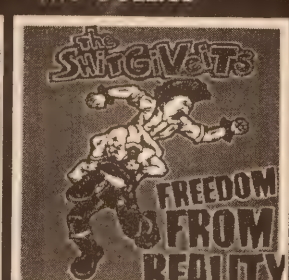
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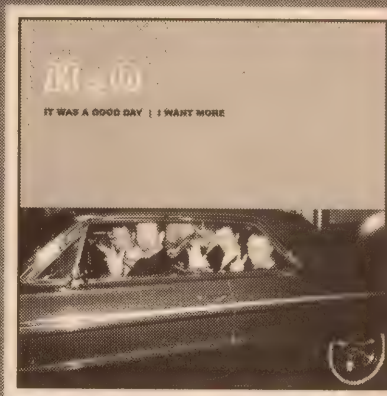
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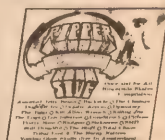
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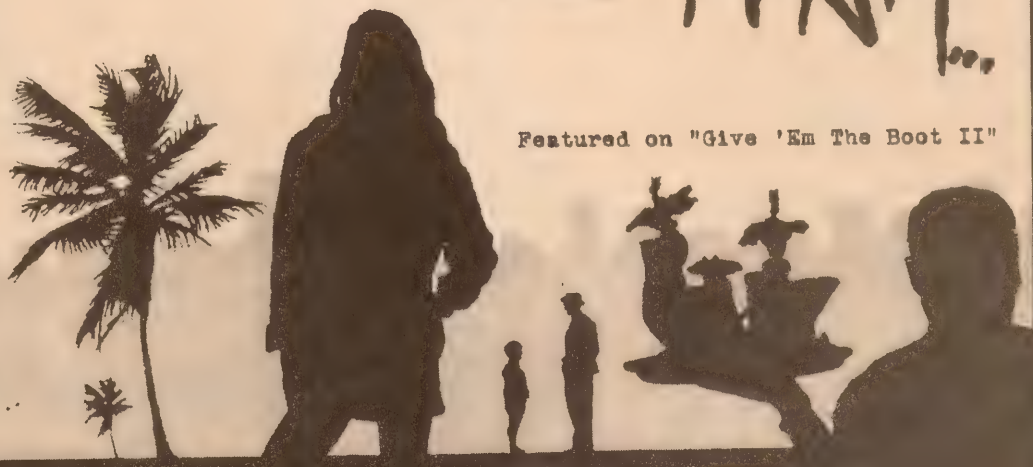
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# TOP PICKS



Below represents the "best of" music that was reviewed for this issue as determined by IMPACT press music reviewers.

**Brujeria • Brujerismo • Roadrunner Records •** There's nothing like a good rumor to fuel a career. Part of Brujeria's appeal is that its members remain completely anonymous, although it is rumored that they include members of Fear Factory, Faith No More, Napalm Death, Cradle of Filth and Dimmu Borgir. You can just imagine what they sound like. On their third full length, they haven't mellowed one bit. Sung in Spanish, the lyrics are brutal, almost to the point of being humorous. The quality on the recording is impeccable, allowing you to understand the lyrics about raping hookers, Satanism, drug use and AIDS. Even though the music is extremely hard, it leans toward a more hardcore/metal sound, rather than the death metal onslaught of "Matando Güeros" and "Raza Odiada."

**Junction 18 • This Vicious Cycle • Fearless Records •** Using hooks and melodies too damn hard to resist, Junction 18 reeled me in with the first track. Then came the second song, "Sweet Steps"; one of the best tunes I've heard all year. From there the melodic, upbeat, tempo-changing punk rock continues. Junction 18 is an equal blend of power, pop and emotion. At times they are reminiscent of Weezer, other times Digger, and still other times Saves The Day. This is, undoubtedly, one of the best punk albums of 2000.

**Sick of It All • Yours Truly • Fat Wreck Chords •** This is the hardcore release to end all hardcore releases! Though I've been disappointed by their prior records, as they haven't compared to what they do live, *Yours Truly* explodes with passion and energy. The antithesis of thug-core, SOIA mixes up their sound and messages on songs like "Hello Pricks" and "America." With lyrics like "Don't make a name for yourself/by stressing out everyone else/ and don't bring your personal wars/ through these doors" SOIA furthers their stance against show violence and gives us an awesome sing-a-long! If you are unfamiliar or have lost interest in hardcore, this record is for you. Though hardcore can be monotonous and repetitive, Sick Of It All gives us such diverse catchy sounds, I've been listening to this CD non-stop.

**The Firebird Band • The Setting Sun and Its Satellites • Cargo Music •** When Braid broke up and three of the four members formed Hey Mercedes I thought, "What happened to the fourth guy, Chris Broach?" Now you and I both know. The Firebird Band is fronted by Broach (vocals, guitar, Roland XP-50 workstation, drum machine). Joined by three others (guitar, bass, keyboard, drums, drum machine), this new band is not Braid. The Firebird Band is part Pixies, part Dismemberment Plan, part new wave and all rock. The creative aspects of this album have astounded me, Broach's vocals have impressed me and each tune (12 total) has made me smile with admiration.

**Unsung Heroes • Unleashed • 75 Ark •** Let's take a trip through the streets of London, the boroughs of NYC. Absorb the flavor, the soul, the essence of the world around you. Now put that

down in musical form. The result: *Unleashed*, a 22-track album from Shivver and Insite (the Unsung Heroes); a work of hip-hop greatness featuring the talents of some of the best and least known artists including J-Live, Mr. Complex, Prime Cuts and L-Fudge. The energy on this album is potent, punching with each track while the lyrics leap to and fro in fluid bursts of enlightenment and education. The beats are bountiful and beautiful, basslines forming the basis for the eclectic and diverse nature of each new tune. From funky to soulful to jazzy and always intelligent (you'll find no gangsta posturing or lyrics on here), this is about as perfect as hip-hop can be.

**Various Artists • The "Gone With The Wind" Of Punk Rock Samplers • Kung Fu Records • KICK ASS!!!** Pardon my French but this is a fantastic compilation disc. This is probably the best one I've heard in years, no kidding. You have the Ataris, The Vandals, Josh Freese, MxPx and others. This is way awesome. I'm not even going to bother reviewing it, just know that it's a must-buy. Stop reading right now and go buy this.

**Various Artists • The Drastic Jungle • Insomniac Music •** In today's Puff Daddy, Big Pimpin' style hip-hop scene, money and bikini clad women rule. Like a breath of fresh air comes this compilation to remind us that there are still some out there that care about this art form. Perhaps to distance himself from the R.A.P. Inc money machine, or perhaps to wake some people up, Israel Vasquetelle (AKA Iz-Real) enlisted the help of some credible hip-hop artists and drum 'n bass DJ's to give an updated sound to the genre. The jagged drum 'n bass (jungle) beats, supplied by Ming + FS, DJ Jeffee and Hive, among others, contrast with the smooth lyrics by Kool Keith, Jeru the Damaja and Bahamadia. In fact, Jeru's "Microphone Memoirs" takes a scathing attack on the corrupt music business, while Princess Superstar makes fun of it on "I Hope I Sell a Lot of Records at Christmastime." Hopefully, music of this caliber will continue to emerge, enough to shake the foundations of today's rap scene.

**Various Artists • Xen Cuts - 3 CDs • Ninja Tune Records •** It's been 10 years since Ninja Tune formed to take over the world. During that time, a lot of good music was made, so they thought it was about time to put out a set celebrating the label's accomplishments. They found so many that they filled three CD's worth, with about 77 minutes each! Disc one features more hip-hop driven tracks, with Big Dada Sound, Amon Tobin, Kid Koala and Coldcut providing some of the beats for the lyrical assaults by the likes of Mass Influence, Resonance and Frank Chickens. Disc two concentrates more on the jazzy, drum 'n bass, trip hop combination of beats that Ninja Tune artists like Animals on Wheels and DJ Food are known for. Finally, Disc three includes hard to find tracks, b-sides, live cuts and remixes. Let's hope Ninja Tune is around for at least 10 more years so they can release another wonderful set.

## CD releases

**1-Speed Bike • Droopy Butt Begone! • Constellation Records •** Aidan Girt knows about steady, droning background music as the drummer for Godspeed You Black Emperor. He used that knowledge to put together *Droopy Butt Begone!*, his debut album that has a more electronic feel. Plenty of loops and samples are mixed together over live drum phrases to give it a fresh but canned effect. As you may imagine, you won't be doing much dancing to this one - instead, you can probably use it as background for whatever you are doing.

**6Gig • Tincan Experiment • Ultimatum Music •** Maine's 6Gig are the new contenders for the heavy rock radio crown. Similar to bands like the Disturbed and Filter, they combine melodic vocals and heavy, hooky guitars to great effect. They belong next to any band you might hear on a local hard rock station or in any summer tour like the Vans Warped Tour or the Ozzfest. As you might expect from this type of album, the production is impeccable, allowing the vocals to fly on top of the heavy riffs without getting lost. I highly recommend *Tincan Experiment* to any fans of heavy music.

**6X • Thunder Bomb • Daemon Records •** Featuring ex-members from 17 Years, Dead Elvis and the Coolies, 6X plays punk rock with a slightly dulled down sound. In fact, it is more pop than punk. Lara Kiang's singing needs a bit of work, but overall, *Thunder Bomb* is a pretty decent recording.

**American Nightmare • American Nightmare • Bridge Nine Records •** This is pissed-off suicidal hardcore that would pass as posi-core if the lyrics weren't printed. The vocal delivery and music doesn't over-dramatize the words of desperation, as perhaps a goth band might. "Fuck What Fireworks Stand For" attains its strength from expressing these emotions, winding with a chorus as if to say "you're not alone in your loneliness." Recommended listening for anyone with angst or going through a rough time in life. There's plenty of scream-along parts for you to release pent up emotions.

**At the Drive-In & Sunshine • split CD • Big Wheel Recreation •** At the Drive-In has been talked about a lot recently, and with good reason. You owe it to yourself to check them out. A nice companion to their music is Sunshine, with whom ATDI share this split CD. Sunshine kicks it off with "Streamlined," a consistent, driving track with an engaging beat and whiny vocals. Then there are two remixes for the same song: the Dead Elektro Mix, with a slightly different, yet equally repetitive beat, and the Line Mix, with an electro boogie sound. Think Afrika Bambaataa's Planet Rock. The last two tracks are by ATDI, "Extracurricular" and "Autorelocator." "Extracurricular" is the closest to what ATDI usually sound like, all crunchy guitars and yelled out vocals. "Autorelocator" has an electronic beat with a groovy bassline and cool keyboards.

**Backside • 10 Million Strong and Growing • El Pocho Loco Records •** This is punk the way it should be. It's a delicate mix of new and old-school, though there is very little about it that is actually delicate. This is fast, but still melodic, angry, but not furious. I'm sure that they sound like another band, but I just can't think of whom they compare to. It is good, quite good.

**Bad Influence • Last Cries • Rock 'n' Roll Radio •** Hailing all the way from Belgium, Bad Influence spews out some pretty tight hardcore with punk and metal influences. There is a likeness to early Corrosion of Conformity at times. The songs are well structured and the lyrics are pretty intense.

**Blue • Holly's Song • Sanity Check Music •** This is the story of an artist who befalls a terrible tragedy. Then through visions in his dreams, he begins to put his life back together. The music is at times haunting, at other times beautiful and always emotional. Blue's singing sounds a bit melodramatic, but it's not too bad.

**Blue States • Nothing Changes Under the Sun • Eighteenth Street Lounge Music •** If you enjoy the Beastie Boys' jamming sessions on *Check Your Head* and *Ill Communication*, or any of Money Mark's albums, then you will like *Nothing Changes Under the Sun*. There are plenty of head nodding tunes with swirling keyboards and lazy beats. Samples range from strings that sound like they were lifted from a 1970's Bond flick, to a little girl's voice taken from a 60's Greek record.



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

**Blue Tip • Polymer • Dischord** • These guys play guitar, bass and drums and there is some guy singing or something. I mean, really, the average band is the music critic's nightmare. Nothing to praise and nothing to vilify leaves very little to say. Except maybe, these guys play guitar, bass and drums. Oh, and I guess they rock.

**Burn Witch Burn • self-titled • Razler Records** • No, this isn't death metal. It is, however, the latest project by the Dead Milkmen's Rodney Anonymous. They play traditional music from Pennsylvania. What?!? That's right. Mandolin, Hurdy-Gurdy, even a freakin' Tin Whistle, for Pete's sake! What's scary is that they are GOOD. Save for the disturbing vocals, this band could play in any Renaissance fair. They wanted to go retro, but this is ridiculous. Check them out for a different musical experience. Expand your horizons, you goddamn punks!

**Catch 22 • Alone In A Crowd • Victory Records** • Think Reel Big Fish. Catch 22 hail from Chicago with a huge horn sound carrying fun melodies. They sometimes wander into the realm of swing but with a trombone, sax and trumpet, who can blame them. Their vocals and lyrics won't change the world but who really cares.

**Cell Block 5 • Push It • Industrial Strength Records** • No, this isn't a tribute to Salt N' Pepa as the album title may lead you to believe. This is drunken, aggressive, punk rock with extra snot thrown in for good measure. It's standard format, three-chord, fast-paced rock and roll that is done well. Don't expect any wild creativity or brilliant lyrics (do expect some great guitar solos) – just expect some good old-school style punk rock for the beer-infused masses – kinda like Dead Kennedys meets The Ramones.

**ChikMountain • Porn On The Cob • Tachist Records** • This is ChikMountain's first full-length CD. The band lives in Washington DC. ChikMountain calls their music "hardcore ambient sound collage". I call it crap.

**Chris Dodge / Dave Witte • East West Blast Test • Slap A Ham Records** • This is an odd one. Chris Dodge is a bassist and Dave Witte is a drummer. They live on opposite coasts, but they did not let this minor inconvenience stop them from recording together. Witte recorded the drum sections, then sent them to Dodge, who recorded everything else. The result is amazingly cohesive hardcore music. Slightly unusual is that most of the songs are instrumental. They are also very short. 27 tracks in 18 minutes come to just under a minute per track. It gives the feeling that this is more of a rough draft than a finished album. Just hit the repeat button on your CD player and listen to it a couple of times.

**Crux • How Does This Go? • Boot To Head Records** • Check this out, I just have to read this to you: "Crux mixed the elements of fast powerful hardcore punk with the melody of their classically jazz trained vocalist..." Huh?! There it is, right in their press material. I'm not making that up. Anyway, what they came up with is their brand of melodic hardcore. It's not different than things you've heard before, but it's probably new to you so you should give it a try.

**Death Cab for Cutie • Forbidden Love EP • Barsuk Records** • Fans of Death Cab for Cutie have this EP to keep them occupied for a while, until the band releases another full length. That will not happen any time soon, since they are constantly touring in support of *We Have the Facts*, and *We're Voting Yes*. The *Forbidden Love EP* contains three new songs, plus alternate versions of "405" and "Company Calls Epilogue," both from *We Have the Facts*... These are beautiful songs with emo leanings and string arrangements in the background.

**DefCon5 • Civil War EP • self-released** • This four-piece from Orlando, Florida is a great band musically. With styles akin to Propagandi (tracks 2 and 4) and Digger (tracks 1 and 3), the music is fast-paced, tempo changing and aggressive. However, the vocals, which are shared among band members, are inconsistent – some very good, some very bad. Lyrically, the songs are also not as solid and two tracks focus on Christian themes – something I'm not very fond of. If DefCon5 were an instrumental band, they would rule. Or, if the vocal duties were limited to the best of the singers and the lyrics were stronger and less religiously-focused, they would rule even more.

**Delarosa & Asora • Agony / Backsome EP • Schematic Music Company / Warp Records** • You could probably describe Delarosa & Asora's sound as muzak for Autechre

fans. There is certainly an experimental feel to these two releases. The tempo is kept slow, like any Trip Hop tune, sometimes drifting into an ambient sound, devoid of beats. However, the sounds sampled here go beyond regular instruments. Voices are manipulated, not allowed to speak complete words. Even the sound of a skipping CD provides an interesting feel to "Swipe Width." Delarosa & Asora is actually Scott Herren, who writes music under different names, with Prefuse 73 and Savath + Savalas among them.

**Detroit Grand Pu Bahs • Sandwiches • Zomba Recording Company** • This CD contains nine different versions of the Detroit Grand Pu Bahs's "Sandwiches." Not only do you get the original version, but you also get mixes that fit into any DJ's set, from house to techno to hip-hop. I wouldn't recommend listening to this CD all the way through, because the chipmunk-sounding vocals repeating the same two lines for 48 minutes will drive you insane. Pick your favorite and forget the others.

**Deviate • State Of Grace • Too Damn Hype Records** • This new Pantera disc rocks! Oh, wait, this is who now? Deviate? OK, we'll call them Deviate then. Well it *could* be Pantera then, how's that? Regardless of who they sound like, they kick ass. That's a sure thing. In fact, I think they kick more ass than Pantera. Deviate is like a really pissed-off Pantera. They have a bigger sound and are more aggressive. In fact, I think I'm replacing what's-their-name's new CD with this one. "Empty World" is my new favorite song.

**Dirty Walt and the Columbus Sanitation • To Put it Bluntly • Triple-X** • A solo project by Fishbone founder "Dirty" Walt Kibby, this heavy-on-the-funk/hip-hop collection is an activist shout-out, an unquestioningly straightforward plea for people to get their heads outta their asses on the drug issue and legalize it. It's smooth, and true, and real, old school dirty weekend party funk. Grab a blunt, and groove to this highly entertaining party album with substance.

**Disarray • A Lesson In Respect • Eclipse Records** • Holy Shit! I mean... Holy Shit! This is one of the best discs I've heard in a long time. Fierce and angry, but not so much that the music is lost. It's like Biohazard without the rap overtones. This is a disc that starts heavy and does not relent until you are a quivering little puddle of piss on the floor.

**Discipline • Nice Guys Finish Last • Too Damn Hype** • Discipline play punk rock with gritty vocals that border on hardcore. The energy is aggressive throughout the album, though sporadic piano harmonies add a nice touch. Of fans will like their cover of Slapshot's "Hang Up Your Boots."

**Dr. Madd Vibe • The Ying Yang Thing • Asian Man Records** • Angelo Moore, lead singer of Fishbone, performs spoken word poetry as Dr. Madd Vibe on this full length CD. My favorite track is "Sing Low," which is sung, not read. It's on this track that I realize why I was not fully into this CD: Moore has an amazing voice! Yet on most of the tracks he talks, without the benefit of the visual. (This is also being released on video, so I recommend that.) "Emotional Man" has instrumental accompaniment and echo effects on the voice, giving something more to carry you through. Moore has some important things to say, however, perhaps just saying it removes the power of his voice and song.

**Dread Fabrik • Soundtrack Of The Revolution • self-released** • And just when I was about to say, "Hey, where the hell is the punk?!" Enter Dread Fabrik. This is some older-sounding punk though I can assure you this band is fresh. They're a socio-politically conscious band who doesn't mind speaking their mind. Oh, and they're pissed. It didn't move the Earth for me but it's worth a listen.

**Dry and Heavy • Full Contact • BSI Records** • I had listened to this album about three times before looking at the liner notes and seeing – surprise! – names like Shigemoto Nanao (drums) and Takeshi Akimoto (bass). Damn, they had me fooled! You could have told me that the guys playing these mostly instrumental reggae tracks were straight from Jamaica, and I would have believed you. But no, they are from Japan, and they are very good.

**dZihan & Kamien • Freaks and Icons • Six Degrees Records** • You would find it hard to guess where dZihan & Kamien are from. Their blend of western percussion with musical elements from European countries gives

no clue that they call Vienna home. *Freaks and Icons* starts out in a party mode, with a catchy danceable tune featuring a groovy bassline and flowing keys. The pace slows down a bit for "Streets of Istanbul" and "Before," whose beats seem to build up to a climax that never arrives. "Slowhand Hussein" is a nice slow trip hop track while "Spacewater" has elements of drum 'n bass and ethereal keyboard atmospheres. The world of dZihan & Kamien has many musical influences, and they are evident on this CD.

**Ensign • For What It's Worth • Nitro Records** • You've got yourself an EP with songs that will be on a full CD to be released in March 2001. Now, on this here EP you've got yourself some hardcore. It's totally no frills and rocks out as much as any hardcore I've heard this month. There are some really heavy, beefy riffs on here and that's just cool with me. I don't know if I'd rush out and pick this up because the full CD will be out in just a few months. However, I would grab that when it hits. Oh, and look for these cats on tour, too. P.S. If you really want to get this EP, by all means, go ahead. I'm not going to be offended.

**Faraquet • The View From This Tower • Dischord Records** • The opening track on this CD is so damn good. It's indie rock at its finest – combining jazz elements with rock while using hyper-creative and constantly moving guitar parts. Much of Faraquet's style is very technical, using varying sounds throughout each song, changing tempo frequently. Their sound has bits of The Dismemberment Plan, Modest Mouse and others – but remains absolutely original. J. Robbins, as engineer for the album, shines through in the amazing recording quality of the release.

**Field Day • The Dawn Of A New Day • Onefoot Records** • This is a rock-n-punk record like so many others – catchy, aggressive, and fun. It seems that there must be a formula to follow in creating a disc of this ilk, because they are all starting to sound the same. Luckily, Field Day has been doing this for over five years. While there is nothing terribly bad about this disc, I wish that bands would start trying new things at some point.

**Forever And A Day • The Art Of Creation • Eulogy Records** • Wow! This is surprisingly good! When I read the press material and saw "emo/rock band from Coral Springs, Florida" I pretty much chalked it up as a loser. However, this is not bad at all. Florida hasn't produced a good band since...uh...um...never. It may have finally happened. I don't know just how much I'd label them an emo band but they are certainly rock. I'd put them in the Bush vein. There are definitely some emo tendencies but it's not emo like Son Volt emo. I don't think the guy's going to kill himself if he doesn't get the girl, you know? This band rocks out as much as any band on the radio right now and they have some great hooks. I bet they're a kick live. Go check them out and let me know. Thanks.

**Forever Goldrush • Halo in my Backpack • Cargo Music** • Forever Goldrush falls somewhere between the Hindu Cowboys, Hootie and the Blowfish and Pearl Jam. The lead singer comes really close to sounding exactly like Eddie Vedder. His bandmates back him up with twangy guitars and harmonies that are a bit too country to be called alternative but a bit too alternative to be called country.

**Frankie Sparo • My Red Scare • Constellation Records** • Poor Frankie, he's so sad. The songs are pretty slow, keeping you in anticipation of every next note. Even though the songs are all somewhat different, only the mood is the same throughout. From single guitar accompaniment to string orchestration, Sparo manages to create a somber mood filled with reverb'd hopelessness. And that's without paying attention to the lyrics!

**Gaskill • Granite Iron Oak • Haffens Records** • The first track and all the remaining songs by Gaskill shows Danzig as a vocal influence on this metal outfit. That's right, Heavy F-ing Metal, the kind with a vocalist who can sing, scream, change his sound, and hold a note. Missed metal due to it's multiple hybridizations and cross-pollinations? Check out Gaskill. It is straight up metal. No hardcore, no death, no speed core, just metal. This gets better each listen!

**H.D.H. • Diesel • Slimstyle Recordings** • This high-energy release from H.D.H. (Hipster Daddy-O and the Handgrenades) will keep you moving all night long. They blend swing, jump blues rockabilly and a bit of punk into



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a powerful dance cocktail. The dash of punk comes from their covers of Adam Ant's "Goody Two Shoes" and the Misfits' "Astro Zombies," with the lead singer sounding very much like Glenn Danzig.

**Idaho • Hearts of Palm • Idaho Music •** Idaho has been together since 1997, and has endured a few lineup changes in that time. *Hearts of Palm* is their sixth full-length album of "slo-core," as they call it. You can just sense the melancholy in Jeff Martin's voice as he sings "To Be the One," backed by an almost Trip-Hop beat. They've toned down the feedback and the antique amps for a more sober, atmospheric sound.

**J Mascis and The Fog • More Light • Eulogy Records •** J Mascis was the man behind Dinosaur Jr., one of the best all-rock bands of the late '80s, early '90s. He's a brilliant guitar player and a fantastic vocalist with a highly recognizable voice. Joining J as The Fog are bass player Mike Watt (formerly with Firehouse/Minutemen) and George Berz (ex-Dinosaur Jr.). The album is a collection of rock songs (11 tracks), some with heavier country influences than others, but undeniably J Mascis. Each tune has a personality, a style of its own, and a hook that absorbs the listener in a cozy yet powerful and emotional way.

**Jamie Lidell • Muddlin Gear • Warp Records •** For those familiar with last year's fantastic release by Super Collider *Head On*, then you are familiar with Jamie Lidell, the voice behind the project. If you were captivated by his vocal style, you might be sad to know that he sings on very few tracks on *Muddlin Gear*. The good news is that this CD does not really need his voice to succeed. His sound treads water in the more experimental Aphex Twin, Autechre and Datch'i. His songs are odes to musical patterns, not necessarily with an underlying theme. Sometimes he pulls all the stops, and journeys into the deep end of experimentation, like in "The Cop It Suite," which features a variety of beeps and beats in no particular arrangement. "Ill Shambata" struggles to be a dance floor song, based on the repetition of a thumping beat, but degenerates into a sample-fest. Not all tracks are a difficult listen, though. "Silent Way" delves into Electro and Brainsdance, while "Droon 99" explores Trip Hop and Ambient. Even the last track, "Daddy No Lie," is a barbershop quartet tune, with barely any electronic effects. This CD is certainly intended for a certain audience, and that audience will love it.

**Janis Figure • Damage Control • Owned & Operated •** "Refreshingly original, and satisfyingly dated," the four boys from JF give us a sound that is wholly unclean-sounding, sort of a purposely unpolished collision of 50's guitar, 60's surf, 70's rock, and 80's punk. It's a great homage to all aspects of rock n' roll. For those who give a stern middle finger to the whole polished world and just want your rock to come naturally, this is your album.

**Jazzanova • The Remixes 1997-2000 • Jazzanova Comp. post Records •** Jazzanova is a Berlin based group of musicians that have been sought out by plenty of artists wanting remixes for their songs. For their debut release, instead of putting out original material, they decided to compile some of their best remixes into a two CD set. Bands like Incognito, 4 Hero, Liquid Lounge, Soul Quality Quartet, Azymuth, and others get the Jazzanova treatment. What you get is a combination of many sounds, including Hip-Hop, Drum and Bass, Boogie, Bossa Nova, Latin and Soul, all rolled up into a nice danceable package. Two tracks are standouts: Incognito's "Get Into My Groove," with its Michael Jackson style vocals and catchy beats, and Ursula Rucker's "Circe," which is \$2.95/minute away from being musical phone sex.

**Jello Biafra • Become The Media - 3 CDs • Alternative Tentacles •** This is ex-Dead Kennedy frontman Jello Biafra's sixth spoken word album. The focus of the three CDs is politics with a heavy emphasis on election issues. Biafra discusses such topics as the WTO convention in Seattle, the Green Party (Jello was one of their presidential nominees), the media and plenty more. This is more than three hours of brilliant oration from one of the more visible figures of the activist movement. Biafra has always been outspoken and, with time, has become even more influential and insightful.

**Keepsake • She Hums Like A Radio EP • Eulogy Records •** This south Florida band offers up five tunes, each catchy, combining a hardcore/emo intensity with an indie

rock charm. The vocals are both well-sung and screamed (sparingly, but effectively). The composition of each tune is creative but not groundbreaking. Still, this is a solid release from a band to keep an eye on.

**Kid With Man Head • Fond Memories of the Halibut Rodeo • Forest Records •** And now accepting the award for best album name, it's Kid With Man Head with *Fond Memories of the Halibut Rodeo*. Oh yeah, there's music here, too. There's some punk and some pop tunes mixed into this six-track EP. With better production and a more polished sound, Kid With Man Head will end up mainstream. "She Won't Sleep With Me" is a highlight.

**L.E.S. Stitches • Lower East Side • Artemis Records •** Track twelve is called "First Beer of the Day". Is there anything else to tell? Okay. These guys are serious about their music. It is fast and fun with that punk-n-roll feel that makes your nipples erect. Fun beer-fueled music to kick back and get hammered to. This is one that any old-school punker needs.

**Left Out • 25cent Serenade • Plan It X Records •** This is one of those rare discs that I just could not feel inspired about in any fashion. It was not too good, but it didn't suck too bad. It was just kind of there. It's pretty standard pop-punk without much to really make you write home about.

**Lifetime • Seven Inches • Temperance Records •** Starting in 1990, Lifetime began punching out punk rock with a hardcore and heartfelt intensity never heard before. After their demise in 1997, the band decided to release two old 7"s on CD (along with a couple other tracks). One of the two 7"s is their first, now released after being remixed. The other is "Tinnitus". Altogether, there are twelve tracks (counting the bonus track) and each one showcases Lifetime's brilliant contribution to punk rock. Check out Kid Dynamite and Zero Zero, two bands formed by former Lifetime members.

**Lovelight Shine • Makes Out • Big Wheel Recreation •** Joey Guerva, Mark Marino and Chris Vanacore from Jeune enlisted bassist Gary Striegel to form Lovelight Shine, with the intention to revamp rock and roll. Mission accomplished. This 19 minute CD packs more punch than some 74-minute releases I have heard recently. "Freedom Fighter" opens it up, with the same intensity that the Delta 72 open up their latest, 000. "X-Ray Vision" keeps the energy, adding some piano to keep the flow going. Things slow down a bit for the third track, "Earth's Last Lifeline," where they take a more majestic tone, with a few strings and vocal harmonies, only to pick it back up with "Foxxmeat." "The March is On" closes the album out with a certain "Bohemian Rhapsody" meets the ending credits theme for Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure quality that I can't quite put my finger on.

**Loyal Frisby • The Escape • Velvet Records •** This band has gone through name and line up changes, but Loyal Frisby has emerged as a hard-driving rock band. The vocals are powerful, full of evocative emotion and spirit. I love the surprise of female vocals and organs for the song "Commencing the Story Part One". With their sound you have a hard time classing them, but it is reminiscent of such bands as *The Pixies* or *For Squirrels*. Coming from Gainesville, which has almost forever been linked with Sister Hazel, Loyal Frisby emerge giving Gainesville, and its starving air waves, new hope.

**Lungfish • Necrophones • Dischord Records •** Lungfish are tripping hard and that's the best possible way to handle this band. If you dig the miscellaneous guitar riffs of Phish with a sort of slow punk tinge you'll do fine here. Number nine in the chain of albums from Lungfish; this is yet another solid chapter full of alt-rock melodies. Each album is a little more polished, even with the grainy voice of Daniel Higgs.

**Mad Parade • Re-Issues • Dr. Strange Records •** A compilation of most of the discography of Mad Parade from 1984's self-titled album through to *A Thousand Words* in 1987. This is a hardcore classic punk sound throughout. This CD is fun as hell without the slightest hint of giving a fuck and hands down the most badass remake of "One Tin Soldier" (yeah, I couldn't imagine it) on tape anywhere. Twenty-three diverse tracks over four years more than justifies picking this up.

**Man of the Year • The Future Is Not Now • Loveless •** With *The Future Is Not Now* Portland's Man of the Year has produced an album of geeky, relentless and shame-

less pop. POP. Bubbling and swirling with so much effervescence and so, so much synth that it made me quite sick; like one of the state fair rides that are supposed to be fun but only succeed in making you hurl.

**Matchless • You Shaped Curve • self-released •** Featuring former members of 66 Saints, this Seattle-based two-guy, two-girl band releases their much anticipated full-length. Matchless has created an amazing following through mp3 promotion, and has sold over a million copies of this album solely through word-of-mouth. It is well deserved, as this is a wonderful offering of genuine, original melodic pop.

**Moron Envy • A Temporary Escape From Insanity • self released •** The only thing that sets Moron Envy apart from other punk bands is the saxophone that creeps in and out throughout the songs. Besides that, this is a pretty generic and mediocre punk album. Even they are aware of this, since the back cover has "WE SUCK!" printed on it.

**My So-Called Band • The Punk Girl Next Door • Yesha, Inc. •** This is pretty standard issue punk that does not do much for me. There is nothing wrong with it, but there is nothing particularly right with it either. The songs are fast and tight with a definite pop-punk feel, but there is something missing.

**Never The Less • Through The Night • Boot To Head Records •** OK, this is a sign. I need to get out more. Here's another Florida band I've never heard of. AND they're from right here in Central Florida! Dammit. Never The Less (NTL) play an aggressive brand of melodic punk. They label themselves as "Good Riddance meets 88 Fingers Louie meets Youth Brigade." I'll have to trust them on that, as I've never heard the latter before. Those bands must be pretty good in their own right because NTL is a damn good band. They have that cool old school sing-along punk vibe going. Which means, yes, you can actually understand this guy's singing. I dig this.

**No Forcefield • Lee's Oriental Massage 415-626-1837 • Stray Records •** Brain and Larry Lalonde from Primus and Extrakid from El Stew got together with some friends to create some compelling and unusual music. It's difficult to categorize, since it gravitates from Drum 'n Bass, to Hip-Hop, to Scratch, without warning. It's as if they don't want to be pinned down, their thoughts revealed. Even the song titles are cryptic. "The John Rucker Redemption Clause" is a fast Drum 'n Bass number with many samples from the old arcade game Defender. "Squid in the Shirt" has a blend of disco and a touch of Latin American rhythms. Don't try to understand them, just listen to them.

**Notaword • Four From Fortieth • Double Zero •** This four-song EP is a fantastic showcase of the energy, melody, and emotion that embody the Midwest sound of Notaword. There is real power here with lots of exceptional guitar play - dramatic pop mixed with emotional hardcore. And it all has an extravagantly optimistic, major tone. Color me impressed, and color me eagerly anticipating a full-length.

**Oozies • Nation Out of Hand • Industrial Strength Records •** Using an anthemic, old-school punk approach to song writing, the Oozies rock out great melodies and hooks with an angst-filled punk attitude. Speedy drums lead the assault with each new track (13 in all), pounding out rapid-fire beats to form the background of this Call quintet. The Oozies combine an Oi! style with catchy punk sing-a-long choruses. This is definitely the perfect album for a boot-stompin' good time.

**Orbiter • Mini LP • Loveless Records •** For those late nights when you just want to chill out and relax with some good tunes, check out Orbiter. Their sound drifts between trip-hop, pop and alternative rock. Fia McGann's vocals are like Gwen Stefani's, but with less attitude. Not only does Harris Thurmond share the microphone with McGann, but he also takes care of just about everything else, except bass and drums on some tracks. Like the title suggests, this *Mini LP* is not very long, but it definitely is sweet.

**Ox • self-titled • Allegory Records •** I simply do not know how to categorize this disc, and, in my opinion, that's a good thing. This is a creative album straddling the bounds between jazz, folk, rock and psychedelic. In defying the norms, Ox has created something that is truly enjoyable to listen to. It is slow and mellow for the most part but is



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far from boring. You won't be disappointed.

**Penfold • Amateurs and Professionals • Milligram Records**  
• Penfold is very much from the new school of weepy power pop: lots of jangly guitars to open the scene, building to an ear-splitting crescendo that lasts half the song if they can help it. The difference between the gold and guano in this genre is emotion, and these guys have it in spades. Give 'em a listen before that big date.

**Plaid • Trainer • Warp Records** • Ed Handley and Andy Turner have been making music together since 1989. This double-CD compiles some of their earlier material released under the names Plaid, Atypic, Balil, Tura, The Black Dog and Repeat. Many of the songs included are not available anywhere else, so if you are a fan of Plaid's brand of electronic music, you should definitely get this one. Even though some tracks tend to go on a bit longer than I would have liked, they still kept me entranced for about 150 minutes. Since the tracks are ordered chronologically, you can witness as their sound morphed through the years. It's one hell of a ride.

**Plastiq Phantom • Enjoy the Art of Lying Down • Sweet Mother Recordings** • Plastiq Phantom is one of those artists that would fit in nicely in the Rephlex and Warp rosters. His songs feature the chaos of Brainsdance, with an obvious likeness to artists like Aphex Twin and Squarepusher. Like Aphex Twin, he experiments with classical music but more in-depth. He blends his tracks with confidence, going from the soothing, classically influenced, "Select Imputor?," to the spurting beat-fest of "Kicking Mister Bubbles." His songs tend to build to a climax that never arrives, leaving you waiting for more.

**Prescott C. • Everything, Upside Down and Backwards • self-released** • Quite excellent for just two people! These Long Islanders produce an offering of combination melodic pop and fuckin' screaming death devil rock! A very unique Jekyll-and-Hyde approach to rock n' roll, and leaves me wondering just where these two would like to be musically. They can be in both places for all I care, because they've got a pretty decent grasp on all of it.

**Project Grudge • Between You & Reality • Medea Records** • By layering electric guitars over synthesizers and distorted vocals, Project Grudge (AKA Mattias Johansson) creates a sound somewhere between Nine Inch Nails, recent Rob Zombie and Chainsaws & Children. There is a definite base of electronica, much like other industrial-techno acts like My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult. *Between You & Reality* won't be winning any awards for originality, but nonetheless it should appeal to industrial music fans.

**Q And Not U • No Kill No Beep Beep • Dischorde Records**  
• This DC quartet has been together for nearly two and a half years. This is their first full-length release. It showcases the band's technical, indie rock approach that has similarities to The Dismemberment Plan, Faraquet and Braid. The music is extremely creative, using various sounds and melodies to keep the music moving while constantly mixing-up tempos. With the help of Ian MacKaye and Don Zientara on the recording, *No Kill No Beep Beep* is a stellar debut album for Q And Not U.

**R.L. Burnside • Wish I Was in Heaven Sitting Down • Fat Possum Records** • Who says you can't teach old dogs new tricks? This 73-year-old musician has no reservations about adding turntable scratches and spare electronic beats to his Blues sound. Don't be misled to think this is some kind of remix album. I said spare electronic beats. This is very much a Country Blues album, with Burnside commanding the microphone. In the opening and closing tracks, he just talks to the listener, recalling tragic times in his past that come to life through his matter of fact delivery. In the humorous "Nothin' Man," he sounds like he's in a daze, repeating phrases like "You can't arrest me!" "You can't arrest me, I pay rent here!" and "I wish my momma would have loved me" for no apparent reason. This album will probably upset purists with its rebellious take on the Blues, which is probably why Epitaph's label Fat Possum is putting it out.

**Red Shift Mantra • self titled • Manteis Recordings** • I was totally blown away by this CD, especially when I learned that this is an Orlando-based band. There aren't many bands in this 'town that play atmospheric, spacey music. Four songs comprise this CD, with about 31 minutes of relaxing sounds. The album opens up with the appropriately titled "Adrift," with conga drums pattering a rhythm while waves of keyboards drift in and out.

Finally, the female vocals come in, sounding a little bit like Sade, but in a higher key. Next comes "Cloud Noise," which starts out as an ambient piece, slowly bringing in keyboards, then flute and other sounds, with an entrancing effect. "Calm Between" is introduced by a melancholic piano that segues into more atmospheric song that again features vocals rich with echo. Finally, "Obsidian" closes the CD out, with congas, flute and faint chanting that give the track a more tribal feeling. This is a CD you'll want to listen to with headphones, in a dark room. You may never come outside again.

**Revolutionary Hydra • The Antiphony • Elsinor Records**  
• The Revolutionary Hydra is one of those literary bands, educated and well read, with lyrics as entertaining and thought provoking as good poetry. For example from one song: "Ye of little faith, you will become an actor, a parody of grace or a paragon of laughter...or Will Shatner." And the songs themselves are as crafted and diverse in style as Thomas Mann short stories. For those of us who like our indie rock a little difficult, this is good stuff.

**Richard Devine • Lipswitch • Schematic Music Company / Warp Records** • There's something about a certain kind of electronic music, call it Brainsdance, or Intelligent Dance Music, that elicits confused comments from those who have never heard it before. Comments like, "What's wrong with your CD player? Is it broken?" I just smile and shake my head, thankful that I'm one of the few who get it. Truth be told, this music is difficult to like, since there are no vocals, and the rhythms are sometimes a bit harsh and repetitive. Normal instrumentation is replaced by short, sputtering sounds assembled in some kind of pattern, morphing into other sounds and patterns. And you can forget about dancing to it. Nonetheless, there is something refreshing about it. Perhaps it is the feeling of hearing something different for once. Bands like Bogdan Raczynski and Ovuca. And Richard Devine. His CD, *Lipswitch*, is fascinating. It comes close to Aphex Twin's *Richard D. James Album* and *Windowlicker*, while not coming off as plagiarism. Oh, make sure you listen to it with your headphones on.

**Rudimentary Peni • The Underclass EP • Outer Himalayan Records** • For nearly 20 years, RP has been rocking out dark, heavy punk tunes. This release is no different. Featuring 12 tracks, most clocking in at just over one minute, *The Underclass* is a new punk album with an old punk feel. Capitalizing on distortion, surprisingly catchy melodies and gruff, in-your-face-vocals, RP dishes out another deadly release.

**Saint Bushmill's Choir • Give 'Em Enough Booze • Broken Rekids** • By the title of this CD, you might assume that this is just another punk band whose sole purpose is to get drunk. In fact, Saint Bushmill's Choir is a band that blends musical elements from their native Ireland with a punk attitude that is both rebellious and entertaining, in the manner of the Tossers.

**Schizoid • All Things Are Connected • D-Trash Records**  
• Digital hardcore in fun effect! Though this is an amazing CD, Schizoid occasionally falls into the same trap as all the digital hardcore bands: political redundancy. The enemies remain the same, the rebellion is still the same, and the slogans are — you guessed it — still the same. Political lyrics aside, the sound warping on "New God" is nothing short of great, as is the sound loop on "Grim Prospects." This is a really great CD if you can gloss through the simplified politics and admire the textures of noise that build these songs.

**Scientific • From the Nest of Idea • Burnt Toast Vinyl** • Oh, how I hate EP length releases. They are way too short, especially when a band is as good as Scientific. They specialize in edgy pop songs characterized by solid guitars and keyboard backdrops. Their sound is at times very much like Stereolab, with repetitive keyboard notes and droning melodies. Somebody please tell Scientific that they are allowed to fill up all 74 minutes on a CD. STOP TEASING US!

**Scum Of The Earth • Better Late Than Never • Boot To Head Records** • Well, this is quite interesting. Scum is an Australian band that is no more. According to the records, they started as an Oi! band and moved into different styles, everything from fuzz grunge to pure punk to ska to straight hardcore. This is different, probably the most original sound I've heard in a while. They really can't be classified under one particular listing. I guess punk is the closest to what they are but this ain't your mama's punk.

**Selby Tigers • Charm City • Hopeless Records** • Loaded with handclaps and joyous adolescent attitude, Selby Tigers return to school on *Charm City*. Old school, that is, where recess rules and power pop meets new wave punk. Judging from the photograph, these Tigers, adorned with receding hairlines and pencil-thin mustaches, have surely seen their 10-year high school reunion. But that doesn't stop them from crafting a catchy and charming album about cutting classes and the validity of geometry.

**Seth Yacovone Band • Dannemora • self-released** • I reviewed this band's last disc and I am shocked to see that they have not been picked up by a label yet. This is a great blues band. They have been opening for the likes of B.B. King and Ray Charles and they can hold their own even against those giants. This is 62+ minutes of good blues with some of the sweetest guitar playing you'll ever hear. Sadly, this disc, while excellent, does not do justice to the band who must be seen live to be fully appreciated. Go get this, baby.

**Shipping News • Very Soon, And In Pleasant Company • Quarterstick** • Shipping News' new album leaves port in very Steve Albini fashion. Slow and crawling, deep bass lines accompanied by high-pitched guitar licks and the menacing whispers: "Show new skin," pause, choppy guitar lick, "Insect man," all elicit a dreadful feeling, as if you have just boarded a ship that's doomed to some nautical disaster. After the dynamic explosion that ends "March Song" we find our selves in the calm of the storm and able to appreciate the sounds of this creaking old schooner. The rest of *Very Soon, And In Pleasant Company* is as big and unpredictable as the ocean that seems to inspire them.

**Sinclair • Attention Teenage Girls • Sonic Unyon** • Oh my! The melodies are too good, my toes won't stop tappin' and my mind is soaring in a cloud of guitar pop-rock goodness. From the vocals to the big riffs and fantastic tempo changes, *Attention Teenage Girls* is 11 tracks of powerful beauty. This quartet is all about rock and they'll rope you in with a catchiness more contagious than the Black Plague. Their style is akin to such bands as Sunday's Best, The Stereo, and Errortype:11 — but let's stop comparing and get back to rocking.

**Slumlordz • Present: Tha Yakuza in Don't Worry about the Kaliber (or nothing like that) • Stray Records** • The songs in this hip hop album will remind you of some kids getting together, their friends jumping around behind them trying to sing about how tough they are. The beats on this album are simple, if anything and the vocals keep missing the beat. It is almost like the vocalists are trying to catch something but haven't yet. They still need practice.

**Smut Peddlers • Porn Again • Rawkus** • Joining forces to form the Peddlers are the amazing High & Mighty (Mr. Eon and DJ Mighty Mi) and MC Cage (aka "Alex"). The energy on this album is constant, a nonstop flow of ghetto flavor with constantly bumping beats, funky instrumentation and catchy loops. Mighty Mi's cuts come correct and on time, not overused but an essential part of the musical composition. The vocals are spit with accuracy, delivering sometimes funny, often raunchy tales from the street. Cage received a little attention through his ongoing static with Eminem over suggestions that Em stole Cage's style. Regardless, this funky, hook-filled 14-track release is all Smut and all good.

**Souls of Mischief • Trilogy: Conflict, Climax, Resolution • Hiero Imperium Records** • The members of this hip-hop band have spent most of their adult lives together and it shows in their lyrical talent. Opio, Tajai, A-Plus and Phesto Dee play tag team on the microphone and flow with the beats that back them up. In a time when the airwaves are filled with the usual gangster rap, it is nice to have some music that can make your head bob and also has something to say. Fans of *A Tribe Called Quest* and *The Roots* keep these guys in mind.

**Southern Culture on the Skids • Liqueured Up and Lacquered Down • TVT Records** • The seventh album from SCOTS is full of Country Western filled twangy guitars and Rhythm and Blues attitude. Throw in a little bit of honky-tonk and Tex-Mex and you have got yourself a good record that knows no genre boundaries. Their lyrics are as funny as ever, apparently fueled from their ever-increasing alcohol consumption. Get this one if you like SCOTS, and you won't be disappointed.

**Still Dreadful • Lucky Fuckerz • El Pocho Loco** • Well, I'll



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be... There is still truth in advertising. This is, in fact, dreadful -- boring and uninspired. All I can say is, don't use obscenities simply because you have nothing else to say.

**Suk • self-titled • Incriminating Records** • This California punk band knows their limitations, but they don't let the fact that their music is crap stop them from recording. Hell, they named themselves Suk. Their sloppy punk is a cross between old D.R.I. and old Corrosion of Conformity, but worse. Save your money, kids.

**Sunshine • Velvet Suicide • Big Wheel Recreation** • Sunshine definitely has a British punk attitude, with jangly guitars and stressed vocals similar to Johnny Lydon from P.I.L. Their all-out rock songs share Rhythm and Blues influences like the Delta 72, but they also fuse pop music tendencies, adding synthesizers as well as handclaps, and other effects. In its heart though, *Velvet Suicide* is simply a rock and roll record.

**Swingin' Utters • self-titled • Fat Wreck Chords** • It's hard to pin down what the Swingin' Utters do so right. Maybe it's the cool, ravin' through the desert, top-down, haulin-ass Johnny Cash country rock tune ("Watching the Wayfarers") or a sweet driving rock beat, but I like it. The rest of the album is solid pop-punk.

**Synthetic 16 • Your Water • Resurrection A.D. Records** • Built from the remains of Tony Stark, Synthetic 16 delivers solid, powerful melodies and heartfelt vocals. The songs are emotionally strong and have a sincere, honest feel. However, these five New Yorkers need to pick up a few catchy hooks to go with their alt-rock style melodies. *Your Water* is well put together technically and musically, it just lacks creativity. The band is touring in New England with a US tour coming up soon, so be on the lookout.

**Taken • Finding Solace in Dissention • Goodfellow Records** • I, personally, found more solace in silence after listening to this disc. It really kind of sucked. There were wild and disconnected chord and tempo changes punctuated by screaming and uninspired guitar licks. They are trying something different, and for that, they must be applauded. However, they should try something else.

**Telegraph • Switched On • Jump Up! Records** • Three years after their debut album comes *Switched On*. Toning down the ska-punk that defined their sound, this release features more accessible songs. Even though there is a horn section, it's hard to classify this CD as ska. Even though songs like "Coffee Drinking Song" retain its ska-punk sound, this album feels like a transition for Telegraph, keeping some of their old sound while experimenting with new directions, with songs like "Would You Jump Too" and "(Baby, Let's Stay) Broken Up" featuring more of a pop sound.

**Telto • Bugged • D<sup>2</sup> Records** • Telto plays alternative rock with a little bit of an attitude. Leslie Dean's vocals sound like a higher-pitched Stevie Nicks. Her dynamic voice can portray anger, then sadness with the emotion of Alanis Morissette. Toward the end tracks, Bugged takes on a more relaxed feel, with the songs sounding a bit more improvisational, like an old Doors tune.

**The Assistant • The Assistant • Milligram Records** • The really interesting parts of this record are sometimes marred by hardcore. "I don't believe" has a great two-minute intro, and then the hardcore kicks in. Still, I really like they seem to have a lot of fun with their music. Their vocal delivery shows the influence of Grade. If you love Grade or scream/sing hardcore, check this out. As an added bonus you get a very cool CD booklet that's filled with their thoughts.

**The Atari Star • Moving In Still Frame • Johannis Face** • In film they say that comedy is much harder than drama to execute. Anyone can make someone cry, just step on their foot. But laughter, the ability to make someone laugh, is a gift. How often do you see a funny movie that's also meaningful, I'm not talking "Little Nicky" here, I'm not talking senseless slapstick, but comedy as a tool to tell a story. It's a delicate balance that requires the master craftsman to execute. The same can be said for the pop song. In today's corporate world the pop song has become the most effective marketing tool, aimed at the lowest common denominator and with the intention of having of all humming. But the "true pop song", that rare and remarkable gem is a testament to the collective unconscious and summoned by those rare harbingers such as the Beatles and perhaps, per-

haps the Atari Star.

**The Bananas • Forbidden Fruit • Plan-It X** • This is loads of fun. It's fast, happy, snotty punk with lots of surprises. The songs are short, as they should be, and assault your senses with yell-singing (which ain't bad at all) over super happy chords. It has a basement sound that is perfectly fitting, but the recording never fails to conjure images of them on stage with hundreds of crazed persons running around knocking each other over. It's just that good.

**The Dickheads • Dick Tease • Wet Puss Records** • I know they sound like another band, but I just can't think of who it is. This is decent punk. The music is fun and well produced enough to keep you listening. The riffs are catchy and fun but not too sugarcoated. There is some sweet harmonization in the singing and, all in all, this is a pretty good disc.

**The Eclectics & Friends • The Look Ahead • Jump Up! Records** • After the relative success of their debut album, *Idle Worship*, the Eclectics took a break and decided to change their sound a bit. Giving their vocalist a break, they enlisted a few friends to take over the vocal duties on a few tracks, including Dennis Buckley from 88 Fingers Louie, Frankie Delmane from Teenage Frames, Tim Kinsella from Cap'n Jazz / Joan of Arc, and Dustin Harris from Skapone. Some of the songs steer away from the ska-punk of the past, opting for a more mainstream pop sound. However, the vibe that was celebrated in *Idle Worship* remains intact.

**The Ex • 1936 - The Spanish Revolution • Alternative Tentacles / AK Press** • This is more than two mini-discs of The Ex's music, tunes that are bound to inspire political change and revolution. This release is a re-packaged photo-book (originally released in 1986) about the Spanish Revolution, a battle by anarchists to overcome fascism. The black and white photography is excellent and tells a powerful story (captions in both English and Spanish). The book is 144 pages and comes with four tracks of material from The Ex, composed of two Spanish anarchist songs and two original tunes of pounding punk rock with a revolutionary attitude.

**The Explosion • Steal This EP • Revelation Records** • My favorite song here is a modified version of Bay City Rollers' "Saturday Night" under the guise of "E.X.P.L.O.S.I.O.N." "Turnaround" has a great build and rhythm. The other tracks here are equally pounding punk rock, though influenced more by 80's groups.

**The Family Dog • So Cal Hardcore • El Pocho Loco Records** • This is some raw, fast and furious old school hardcore. By old school I mean that it doesn't sound like the hardcore of today (i.e. the new school). With me so far? This could better be described as ska minus the reggae, plus some not-grungy hardcore. This is a pretty good disc if you're sick of hearing the metal-esque hardcore of today.

**The Fire Show • self-titled • Perishable Records** • Give these guys credit: the production alone on this CD shows ambition. The Fire Show is something like what the Mercury Program would be if they just decided to rock out a little (OK, a lot). It's your call whether this is a good or bad thing. Some good lyrics here too, that could use some decent vocals to do them justice. All in all, worth a shot for atmospheric value alone.

**The Good Life • Novena on a Nocturn • Better Looking Records** • From the lyrical content of *Novena on a Nocturn*, this band should be called The Sad, Regrettable Life. This side project by Tim Kasher, singer/guitarist for Cursive, makes sad music centered on Kasher's disappointment in himself, as well as in others. Whether it's wondering about an old flame in "Your Birthday Present," or telling his mother about his failures in "What We Fall For When We're Already Down," Kasher uses mostly acoustic instruments and some keyboards to create a helpless mood. There is definitely a Cure vibe on this album.

**The Hope Conspiracy • COLDBLUE • Equal Vision** • This is extremely melodic for being so heavy. Sonically, the songs constantly evolve as they progress, which is such a rarity within the repetitive structure of hardcore. The production level is high, so this truly is a treat to hear. The lyrics are not as impressive as the music, but the vocal delivery is up to snuff, so just listen and be amazed at this new sonic mastery within hardcore.

**The Krays • A Battle For the Truth • Temperance Records**

• The Krays proves themselves to be great lyricists and one of the rays of hope for punk rock despair. Unafraid to tweak their vocals in the studio, this CD's production does them justice on the faster and slower numbers. Influenced by late 70's/early 80's punk and rock and roll, The Krays have put out one of the best punk rock records I've heard in a long time. They, like most punk bands, are not getting rich off their efforts, so validate them and give this a listen, dammit.

**The Last Kind • Revelations • Stray Records** • Despite rockin' the mic for over 10 years, The Last Kind are just dropping their first national release. It has been worth the wait. This LA crew delivers bumpin' beats with smooth loops and flawless flows. While they don't break any boundaries or create a new sound, this is damn good hip-hop coming through in a world of fake-ass MCs. The rhymes on this release are the kind that make ya think and the beats will have you bouncin' in your vehicle. The diversity of the vocalists, two from LA and two from the northeast, create an eclectic blend of dope shit.

**The Limes • Turn Your Lights Off • Deluxe Records** • I would describe the Limes as rock/pop with a bit of an edge. Witness the opening track, "Wrong Way," with its Lemonheads-meets-Urge Overkill sound, perfect for radio play. Contrast it with "Smile," and its almost punk energy and driving drumbeat. Add to that a cover of the Smiths' "London" and you've got yourself a pretty good rock album.

**The Marshes • Recluse • Dr. Strange Records** • The three-piece featuring Colin Sears of ex-Dag Nasty fame on drums is back with their fourth album. While nothing has come close to their debut on Grass Records, this is their best album since then. They've added a trumpet on some songs and continue with their aggressive, fast-paced punk rock and roll. The melodies are present on every song, tempo changes around every corner and the vocals are angst-filled and emotionally-charged.

**The Milwaukeees • The Bland Comfort of Life With Lloyd Justin EP • Twentyfourseven Records** • This may be the best alternative rock band around. I apologize for using the word "alternative" -- but this band definitely fits the radio-ready, hard-rock genre. However, these guys do it better than anyone -- and for that reason alone, you will probably never hear 'em on your local rock station. With an emotionally-charged musical delivery and powerful vocals, The Milwaukeees create strikingly good rock songs (six on this EP). With bands like Knapsack and Crumb out of the picture, these guys are ready to fill the void.

**The Mr. T Experience • The Miracle of Shame • Lookout! Records** • I think it is safe to say that The Mr. T Experience have drifted away from punk music. They had been leaning that way for a while now, but this EP is nothing but sweet pop music. The only song that could be considered pop-punk is "Mr. Ramones," a short ditty about an obsession with the legendary punk group. Don't worry, the lyrics are still ironic and humorous, so their essence is intact.

**The Nation of Ulysses • The Embassy Tapes • Dischord Records** • Both a musical and political force, this "new" release from NOU is their last recorded material. It was recorded and mixed in '92 and has finally been released for the masses to revel in. As much a political assault as an aural attack, NOU's noisy musical approach was groundbreaking, threatening and intense -- a combination of indie rock, artsy noise and avant-garde jazz. This final release is one to be handled carefully, enjoyed immensely, and never fully understood.

**The New Morty Show • Rigormorty • Slimstyle Records** • For those of you still interested in Swing music, check out The New Morty Show. Focusing on Golden-Era jump-swing, their songs are full of energy waiting to explode. Male and female vocals tag team the lyrics as this 10-piece rips through 10 tracks, including covers of Poison's "Unskinny Bop," X's "Hungry Wolf" and Cole Porter's "Just one of those Things."

**The No WTO Combo • Live from the Battle in Seattle • Alternative Tentacles** • As all eyes focused on Seattle this past November, Jello Biafra (Dead Kennedys), Krist Novoselic (Nirvana), Kim Thayil (Soundgarden) and Gina Wainwal (Sweet 75) decided to get together and play a concert as their way to protest the proceedings. This CD features their performance, which includes two new songs, and two classics by Dead Kennedys and DOA. Also included are two spoken word tracks by Mr. Biafra, as well as his recounting of the events leading up to the



# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

concert in the liner notes. Krist Novoselic also penned part of the inside booklet, which lists organizations you can contact to offer your help.

**The Port Huron Statement • Home Recordings 1997-1999 • Bittersweet** • This is the ultimate example of truth in advertising. *Home Recordings 1997-1999* is just that, a series of songs that Chip Taylor wrote, played and recorded himself during those years. The result certainly has an intimate, personal sound. These songs don't aspire to much, limiting each to only a few instruments, with very few effects, similar to Eric Alexandrakis's *I.V. Catalonia*.

**The Real Diego • e.p. 23:16 • What Else? Records** • From San Pedro, CA comes The Real Diego (I didn't know there was a fake Diego), playing indie/emo style music similar to the Promise Ring or Sunday's Best. By the title of the CD, you can guess it's 23 minutes, 16 seconds long, and The Real Diego sure know how to economize, giving you the best stuff in a small amount of time. The songs are emotional, and waste no time getting down to business, going from slow and melodic (the Weekend) to faster, hookier stuff (Niagara Falls), then back down (New Settlers).

**The Showgoats • Catfish Sunday • self-released** • Listening to The Showgoats puts me in a good mood. The mix of vocals and bass come together as an upbeat indie band way. This collection of professional lawyers, account directors, and a veterinarian came together after college for the love of making music and performing. The lively, happy vocals show you the way a band can be when they don't have to worry about school or some minimum wage job. I love how they threw the chimes and harmonicas into the songs. The band, at times, reminds me of REM or old U2.

**The Sissies • Geography • Plan It-X Records** • The Sissies are one of those rare bands that manage to create a listenable album despite the lack of any real musical talent. Much like the Dead Milkmen and Half Japanese before them, this Indiana, all-female garage band goes at it with such free spirit and abandon that you can't help but admire their effort. They're sure to be an inspiration for young girls everywhere.

**The Trouble with Sweeney • self-titled EP • Burn Toast Vinyl** • The soft melodies of this band and the sweet, pseudo-depressing vocals seem to make you forget that you have anything else you should be doing except sitting back and enjoying the music. The sweet, folksy vocals almost make you forget the simplicity of this three-member band. Fans of *The Sundays* and *Belle and Sebastian* should take notice. After listening to this six-song CD, you are left feeling teased. Luckily, they are currently recording a full-length album.

**The White Octave • Style No. 6312 • Deep Elm Records** • The White Octave should appeal to fans of indie rock and tempo shifts. Standout songs on this full length include "Etc," a short Sonic Youth inspired dirge, "Devise Executives" which rocks out, and the instrumental "Adult Entertainment." They occasionally stray into the familiar area of indie rock with "Crossing the Rubicon," and even seem to lift from Led Zeppelin on the title track intro. All said, this should find a place in the hearts of indie rockers.

**The Winter Blanket • Hopeless Lullaby • Plowcity** • When describing The Winter Blanket it is very difficult not to use the obvious metaphors. Produced by Alan Sparhawk of Low and featuring him on three songs, *Hopeless Lullaby* will surely be keeping many listeners warm this holiday season with their sparse instrumentation, soothing harmonies and confessional lyrics. Add this to the stockings of those melancholy souls. This is exceptional softcore.

**This Bike is a Pipe Bomb • Dance Party With... • Plan-It-X** • Happy rock to cleanse the soul. Sure, it's amateurish, but it's a super-fun dirty sound, and we can never have enough of that. They throw in nice surprises like harmonicas, and every member of the band is pretty much a frontman. We hear them singing, sometimes mildly screaming the vocals in unison. A very cute effort, and with many charms.

**Tommy Guerrero & Gadget • Hoy Yen Ass'n • Function 8 Records** • Ex-skateboarder turned musician Tommy Guerrero and musical co-conspirator Gadget are lazy. Well, they are not lazy, but their music is. These 15 tracks revolve around slow, groovy beats with plenty of

atmospherics and samples. Jazz and hip hop are represented as well in Hoy Yen Ass'n, their latest release for Gadget's own Function 8 label. "1 Ton Souperman" and "Weed on the Tree, Forty on the Floor" have been re-released as singles, as well as "Mechanisms," which features John Gold gently singing over languid beats and crowd samples. Don't operate any heavy machinery while listening to this CD.

**Tor • Eye To Eye • self-released** • Tor is a singer-songwriter who divides his time between NYC and LA. His music is radio-friendly pop rock with an emphasis on catchy hooks and kick-ass vocals. Tor plays all the keys on this album and handles all the vocal duties. The rest is played by other musicians (which includes Counting Crows drummer Steve Bowman). Comparisons could be made to such artists as Billy Joel, Elvis Costello (pre Burt Bacharach material), Too Much Joy and numerous others. But Tor's songs come together in a unique way that sets him apart. The 11-track album features mostly mid-tempo, super melodic songs with a couple slower tunes that will warm your heart. (Visit [tor.net](http://tor.net) to buy it)

**Two Lone Swordsman • Tiny Reminders • Warp Records** • Andrew Weatherall and Keith Tenniswood are the Two Lone Swordsman, creating electronic beats with a darker, more experimental feel. While not as far left-field as labelmate Squarepusher, TLS hold their own when it comes to weird sound samples and catchy beats. Video game sounds and heavy breathing are just some of the aural samples you'll hear on this CD. Their sound can at times be described as minimalist, centering some songs around a few particular beats and samples. At other times it is uptempo and quirky, even danceable.

**Uncle Eddie • Uncleddium • Crustacean Records** • Just a little 24-minute EP to keep you entertained while Uncle Eddie work on their next full length release. They mix the guitar sound of Don Caballero with pop tendencies and geeky vocals to create a nice blend. No offense to the lead singer, but the instrumental "Living Room" is the best track on this CD.

**Various Artists • Believe The Hype • Too Damn Hype Records** • Did you read the review on Deviate yet? If so, you can get the gist of this compilation. If not, let me help you. This is heavy music. There's everything from hardcore to punk to rapcore to all out thrash on here. It's all pretty good and is a nice mix for the hard music fans out there.

**Various Artists • Cue's Hip Hop Shop Vol. 2 • Stray Records** • What is it? I'm not exactly sure. There's no verbal hip-hop, no rhyming finesse, only an abundance of samples and electronic beats performed by various unknowns (incl. Westside Chemical, Eddie Def, DJ Tomkat and more). Perhaps it's for you, the listener, the aspiring hip-hop hero, to practice your chops with. And of special note to all you Star Wars fans, there is a cool ditty that pits samples of the rebel battle theme against the imperial battle theme. That alone may make this worthy of purchase.

**Various Artists • Disintegrated: A Tribute to the Cure • Too Damn Hype Records** • You have to be careful with tribute CD's. A lot of the time, let's face it, they suck. Such is not the case here. These loose interpretations of Cure tracks, such as "Fascination Street," "Lullaby" and "Disintegration" are actually pretty good. Who are the bands, you might ask? None other than some of the heaviest musicians around, from Chimaira to Converge, Neck to Voice of Reason. Not being a Cure fan myself, I can objectively say that these songs are good enough to stand on their own. Hardcore Cure fans might disagree, but what can you do?

**Various Artists • Docking Sequence: BSI Campaign Vol. 1 • BSI Records** • If you enjoy listening to dub as well as electronica, you owe it to yourself to check out this compilation. The two genres are blended together, along with hip-hop, dancehall and experimental music. Almost all tracks are exclusive to this comp, by artists from all over the globe, including DJ Spooky, Otaku, Bucolic, DJ Collage, and more, for a total of 21 tracks. Some tracks, like Dubcreator's "Deep Dub," are more in the traditional dub sound, while "Perpetual Next," by Sound Secretion, has more of a hip-hop feel. All tracks seem to fit together well, delivering about 70 minutes of head nodding killer music.

**Various Artists • Free Activation Series Vol. 2 • Sweet Mother Recordings** • DJ Nasir compiled and mixed these 13 tracks from fast to slow tempo beats. From Plastic

Phantom's classically influenced "Select Imputor?" to Advertising the Invisible's "Night Walker," with its disco era strings, this comp keeps the ball rolling with different styles that blend together. Bahamadia's "Pep Talk" features a somewhat sped up rapping over jungle beats. Snowboy's "Oye Ya Ya" mixes Latin American percussion and horns into a danceable concoction. Buscemi's "Nightlife At 3:33" has a jazzy, Bossa Nova, lounge feel. As you can see, no two tracks are alike, but that won't stop you from enjoying *Free Activation Series Vol. 2*.

**Various Artists • H.E.A.R. This • Sub City** • Music released for a good cause is what Sub City prides itself on. With this 28-track compilation, Sub City looks to raise money for H.E.A.R. (Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers), a non-profit organization raising awareness of the dangers of repeated exposure to excessive noise levels. It's a worthy cause and a CD definitely worth listening to (at a safe volume, of course). Included on the disc are great rockers such as Scared of Chaka, Link 80, Damnation, Shonen Knife, Electric Summer, The McRackins and many more.

**Various Artists • Hopelessly Devoted To You Vol. 3 • Hopeless Records** • Hopeless Records gives you a 23-song sampler of bands on their label. This CD includes previously unreleased tracks by Dillinger Four, Samiam, Fifteen, Mustard Plug, Selby Tigers, Against All Authority, and more! In addition to the unreleased stuff, you get songs from their new records! If you like punk, ska, emo, or indie rock, add this to your collection.

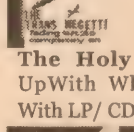
**Various Artists • I Guess This Is Goodbye - The Emo Diaries - Chapter Five • Deep Elm Records** • This is the fifth installment in Deep Elm's series that, according to their press material, attempts to document "an extraordinary and powerful style of music that possesses the ability to stir strong emotions like no other." Consider it a success because, for the fifth time in a row, Deep Elm has released an excellent compilation of bands. But these aren't just "emo" bands. There's indie rock and punk and hardcore and experimental all thrown in, all emotionally charged. Of the 12 bands featured, my favorites are The White Octave (Chapel Hill), Slowride (Dallas) and Cast Aside (Rochester).

**Various Artists • Listen Picks: Hip-Hop • Listen.com** • The folks at Listen.com, a pretty cool music downloading website, put together a compilation of their favorite Hip-Hop tracks. It features mostly laid-back beats and no gangsta rap. Some of the artists include Del The Funky Homosapien, Meta 4, Creeper, The Coup, Non Phixion and Enterpize, to name a few, 15 tracks in all. My personal favorites were instrumental tunes, "Rock 'n

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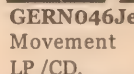
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# ☆ quickies...a little bit on a lot of records ☆

Roll (Could Never Hip-Hop Like This)" by Handsome Boy Modeling School, with its interesting and humorous fashion inspired samples, and Creeper's "Sub Pop Bionic," a futuristic electro track with vocoder-processed lyrics and a Funkadelic vibe.

**Various Artists • Lost, Lonely And Vicious • Boot To Head Records** • You've got yourself a punk compilation here, gang. The songs on here are either exclusive to this disc, a different recording than has been available and/or very hard to find tunes. Some of the groups on here are Left Out, The Blamed, Youth Misled, Crux, Scum of the Earth and Shorthanded. There are 31 tunes on here so you will need a lot of time to listen to this one. Bang for your buck is what we're all about.

**Various Artists • Lyricist Lounge 2 • Rawkus** • Indie hip-hop is finally getting respect and labels like Rawkus are part of the reason. This compilation features some amazing cuts, diverse styles and some of the best known and least known in the hip-hop world. There are 18 tracks in all. My favorites are the smoothed-out "Oh No" (Mos Def and Pharoahe Monch feat. Nate Dogg), the rapid-fire "Let's Grow" (Royce The 5'9"), and the bumpin' "Sharp Shooters" (Talib Kweli and Dead Prez). Also featured on this release are Kool G Rap, Q-Tip, Dilated Peoples, Cocoa Brows and more.

**Various Artists • Ripper Side Skates Compilation • El Pocho Loco** • As with any compilation disc, there are good songs here and there are bad songs. I am delighted to inform you that the balance leans heavily toward the good on this disc. There are some really great songs from The Jiggz, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Total Chaos and Pitboss as well as many others. There are a few clunkers, but hell, that's what the skip button on your CD player is for.

**Various Artists • SoleSides Greatest Bumps - 2 CDs • Quannum** • This double CD collection features incredibly rare and hard-to-find hip-hop from some of the best in the Cali scene. Produced by DJ Shadow, Chief Xcel and Lyrics Born, this is some of the dopest shit ever recorded. The 22 tracks document the wildly jazzy and soulful hip-hop sounds of the SoleSides crew. That group of artists includes Blackalicious, Latyrx, Gift of Gab and many more. The material spans several years (from 1992-'97). From freestyles to dope beats to DJ feats of fantastic proportions, this release is a hip-hop dream-come-true.

**Various Artists • Stray From The Pack • Stray Recordings** • This compilation unites many of Stray's artists, such as Sly Doc, Azeem, Antares, DJ Cue, No Forcefield and the Coup. Some tracks are instrumental, like Westside Chemical's drum and bass influenced "5 Finger Johnny" and No Forcefield's "The Hard R," but most of the 21 tracks feature rapping over smooth hip-hop beats.

**Vietnom • Strictly the Real EP • Uprising** • This six-song CD EP has two really strong hip-hop tracks — "Vietnom Intro" and "Death is the Outro." "Strictly the Real" is a rap/live hardcore instrumentation fusion that is true to 80's street rap. If you like NYC Hardcore, you'll probably dig the other tracks. Still, it's Vietnom's hip-hop that makes this stand out from other hardcore and hip-hop releases.

**Voodoo Glow Skulls • The Potty Training Years • El Pocho Loco** • The Potty Training Years is actually a ten year old recording from the Voodoo Glow Skulls' formative years. In fact, this CD is the result of their first-ever recording session, back in 1991. Unhappy with the result, they shelved it, only to release some songs on vinyl, and others that became part of 1996's *Firme*. If you can call them anything, call them consistent, since their sound hasn't changed that much in all this time. There are 18 tracks in total, featuring covers of the Beatles's "Here Comes the Sun," the Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go" and an old Descendents song whose name I forget.

**Wobblshop • Biography • Big Record Company** • Southern California's Wobblshop write pop music centered around the vocal harmonies provided by Brian Holmes and Levi Nuñez, who are the only two members, playing all the instruments except drums. The music sounds like a cross between R.E.M. and They Might Be Giants, but without the humor.

**Zero Boys • Vicious Circle • Panic Button Records** • Remember when punk was about drugs and more drugs? These guys were kickin' ass in '82 and here is a re-release with some bonus tracks included for your aural amazement. This is like a cross between the Dead Kennedys and The Angry Samoans. Fast, angry and fun.

## Vinyl releases

**Foreign Legion • Kidnapper Van 2xLP • Insidious Urban Records** • This double LP (aka Beats To Rock While Bike-Stealin') is a collection of 15 tracks of intelligent flows and jazzy, bumpin' beats — traditional indie hip-hop in effect. The rhyme delivery is skillful. But the repetitive loops get on my nerves after while. They are good loops, but they need to mix it up a bit. I do love the injection of horn samples on several of the cuts. However, FL will need to diversify and, although they definitely will have appeal (fans of Dilated Peoples and Aceyalone take a listen), their next album will need to take a step forward.

**Foreign Legion • Nowhere to Hide 12" • Insidious Urban Records** • The hip-hop trio consisting of Prozack, Marc Stretch (AKA Peter Parker) and DJ Design drop this single with a remix of the title track, as well as two instrumental versions. Also featured is the track "Meanwhile," also with an instrumental version. The lyrics for "Nowhere to Hide" are right out of a conspiracy theorists handbook, rapping about government plots to destroy the black man, skin imbedded microchips, men in black suits and black helicopters, etc. They're joking, right?

**George Maritme • Jumpy's Blues 7" • Slutfish** • Maritme is a folk musician. He also happens to be a communist. His music is good — communism is not good. So, let's put aside his party affiliation and show some love. This is a live recording (of two songs) from 1989 and apparently Maritme had drank a little and gave a better than average show. Regardless, it's folk music like Bob Dylan did — Maritme strummin' and Maritme singing.

**Harsh • self-titled 7" • Rat-Town Records** • This is harsh hardcore from north Florida. However, this nine-song 7" (yes, a lot of songs — they're short) was released in 1999. I'm not sure why I'm reviewing something this old. Anyway, if you're into screaming vocals, very fast music and some heavy guitars, you'll probably like this.

**Headnodic • Headnodic Beats, Vol. 1 LP • Insidious Urban Records** • I don't know if Headnodic refers to head-nodding, or the hypnotic sounds he makes, but either definition would apply here. On *Headnodic Beats, Vol. 1*, he assembled 14 tracks of mostly trip-hop/hip-hop beats. Most tracks feature a steady beat, with one or two instruments taking on the melodies, be it strings or keys. There's even a track called "Cuts 1," with just about every sample you've heard on hip-hop records before, all back to back and with no background music, so you can sample them yourself. Get ready to fall into a hypnotic state from all the head-nodding produced by this album.

**Kubiq • Neva U 12" • Heratik Productions** • Rugged and in your face, Kubiq is a lyricist to be reckoned with. His flows are nearly flawless, spit skillfully over funky-ass beats delivered by Fanatik. Kubiq has a somewhat aggressive lyrical delivery but a jazzy, funky musical attitude, creating indie hip-hop that will definitely get the party started. Both tracks on this 12" are above average — give your needle a chance to ride the grooves of this vinyl delight.

**Narcoleptic Youth/The Voids • split 7" • Straight Jacket Records** • NY has been around since '92. The offer up three tracks of fast tempo punk rock with a definite old school attitude — and they do it very well. The Voids offer up five tunes of their own — also with an old school flair. The tempo is fast, the music is furious and the vocals are female — what a great combination! They remind me of Blatz (old Lookout! Band), which is a very good thing. This is a must have 7" for fans of fast-paced, old-style punk rock.

**Phantom Patient • The Fear 12" • Entartete Kunst** • This 12" single release has three versions of "The Fear," from Phantom Patient's album *Songs from Downstairs*. The songs feature slowed down, trip hop beats and scattered samples. "If" has a guy in a heavy Scottish accent speaking/rapping through a vocoder, while bagpipes break in and out of the background. This song, as well as "No Surrender," also appears on the album.

**Sub Contents • Death Becomes H.E.R. 12" • Heratik Productions** • Backed by Fanatik's deep beats and some fresh samples, Sub Contents comes correct with quick flows and rhymes galore. The three tracks on here (including instrumentals of each) are solid, slightly repetitive, but are an overall success. It's obvious that Fanatik has much skills and he definitely helps Sub Contents set it off. It's a bumpin' set of singles, three tracks to put excitement into your speakers.

**The Blank Fight • House Band Feud 7" • BBT** • With Aaron Cometbus on drums, The Blank Fight will probably get more attention than deserved. That's not to say the band isn't good. They are a good punk rock band with a rough sound and a quick pace to their songs (all six of 'em on here). This is East Bay style punk rock that wouldn't have been out of place on Lookout! Records ten years ago or today.

## Label Addresses

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 BBT, 243 14th Street, San Fran, CA 94103  
 Better Looking, 11041 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 302, LA, CA 90025  
 Big Record Co., 1460 7th St., Ste. 201, Santa Monica, CA 90401  
 Big Wheel Recordings, 325 Huntington Ave. #24, Boston, MA 02115  
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 Boot To Head Records, PO Box 9005, Portland, OR 97207  
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 Broken Rekids, PO Box 460402, San Fran, CA 94146-0402  
 BSI Records, 4005 SE 28th Ave., Portland, OR 97202  
 Burnt Toast Vinyl, PO Box 42188, Philadelphia, PA 19101  
 Cargo Music, 4901-906 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92117-3432  
 Compost Records, Haager Str. 10, D-81671 München  
 Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal, Canada H2W 2T3  
 Crustacean Records, PO Box 370156, Milwaukee, WI 53237  
 D' Rees, PO Box 225313, San Fran, CA 94122-5313  
 Daemon Records, PO Box 1207, Decatur, GA 30031  
 Deep Elm Records, PO Box 36939, Charlotte NC 28236  
 De/Con 5, dvchnd5@aol.com  
 Deluxe Records, PO Box 600245, Dallas, TX 75360  
 Dischord Records, 3819 Beecher St, NW, Washington DC 20007  
 Double Zero Records, PO Box 7122, Algonquin, IL 60122  
 Dread Fabrik, 50 Powers Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
 Dr. Strange Records, PO Box 7000-117, Alta Loma, CA 91701  
 D-Trash Records, 34 Ontario St. N. #1, Kitchener, ON Canada N2H 4Y4  
 Eclipse Records, 23 Ward Ave., Butler, NJ 07405  
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 Razler Records, 2300 Walnut Street No. 812, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
 Resurrection AD Records, PO Box 763, Red Bank, NJ 07701  
 Revelation Records, PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232  
 Roadrunner Records, 902 Broadway, New York, NY 10010  
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 Seth Yacovone Band, Box 112, Winoski, VT 05404  
 Sex Degrees Records, PO Box 411347, San Francisco, CA 94141-1347  
 Slap A Ham Records, PO Box 420843, San Francisco, CA 94142-0843  
 Slimstyle Records, 3400 E. Speedway, Ste. 118-272, Tucson, AZ 85716  
 Slutfish, 327 Bedford Ave. #A2, Brooklyn, NY 11211  
 Sonic Unyon, PO Box 57347, Jackson Station, Hamilton, ON, Canada L8P 4X2  
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 Triple-X Records, PO Box 862529, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2529  
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Where: Harbor Club, Tampa, Florida

Info: 813.935.0581

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When: December 15-17, 2000

Where: Micanopy, Florida

Info: 727.538.9050

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When: December 16-24, 2000

Where: Newbury Street Gap, Boston

Info: 781.891.0468

**SE Regional Compassion for Animals Action Symposium**

When: February 24, 2001

Where: Holiday Inn, Gainesville, FL

Info: [www.vegetarianevents.com](http://www.vegetarianevents.com)

**Protest the Inauguration of the Next President**

When: January 20, 2001

Where: Washington, DC

Info: [www.iacenter.com](http://www.iacenter.com)

**World Social Forum**

When: January 25-30, 2001

Where: Porto Alegre, Brazil

Info: [www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)

**National Conference on Organized Resistance**

When: January 27-28, 2001

Where: American Univ., Wash. DC

Info: 202.744.0853

**Oregon HATE CRIMES Conference**

When: February 11-13, 2001

Where: Hilton, Eugene, Oregon

Info: 541.682.5177

**FORML's 4th Annual Washington's Birthday Hemp Fest**

When: February 24, 2001

Where: Lowry Park, Tampa, FL

Info: 813.779.2551

**IMC Intl. Rad. Political Film Fest**

When: February 25, 2001

Where: Los Angeles, CA

Info: 323.466.5094

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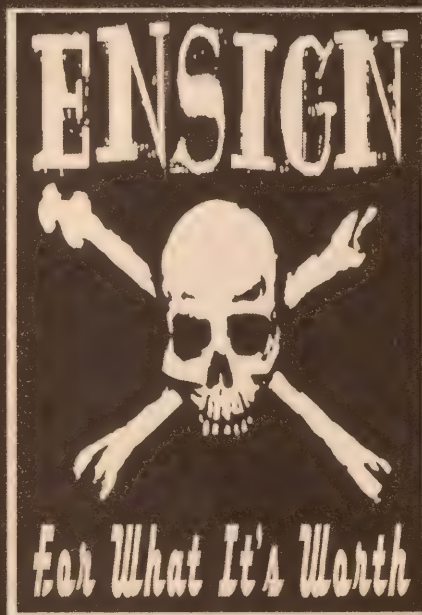
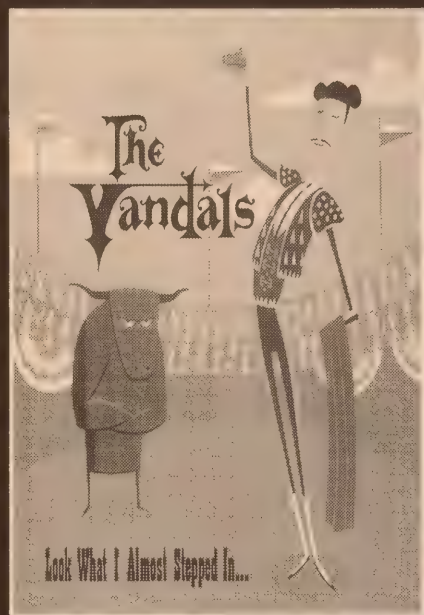


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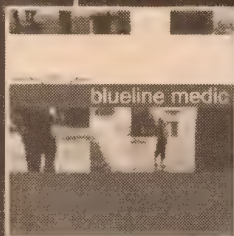
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a working title in green  
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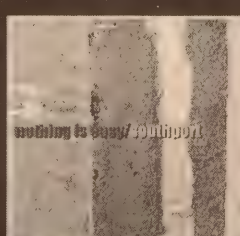
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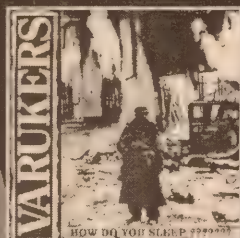
Soundtrack to Tremor's newest hit film features songs from Anti-Flag, NOFX, Lunachicks, Less Than Jake, All, GWAR, Bouncing Souls, Vandal, Rocket From The Crypt, GVSB, Sick Of It All and more!

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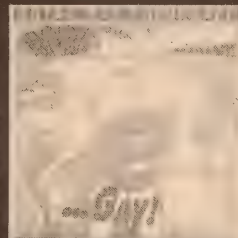


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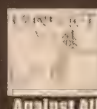


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# Make An IMPACT on HIV/STDs

By  
Jeffrey-  
John  
Nunziata

regimen of drugs from the 14<sup>th</sup> week of their pregnancy onward, during labor and after birth as well.

Please email questions to Jeff at: sk8board@worldnet.att.net

If you have any questions about HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and or sex and/or want information on HIV services and referrals anywhere in the United States please feel free to send an email to me or write a letter. If you just want referrals, please include the name of the town that you live in and/or the county and state so that I can more easily facilitate getting you hooked up with services. If you do not want your letter published, please state so. Please do not use your real name in your questions and please be aware that your emails are confidential and NO ONE has access to them except the writer. This service is provided for you FREE from IMPACT PRESS in cooperation with the State of Florida Department of Health HIV/AIDS Program Office, Tampa Bay.

*If we choose your question we will send you a hella kool safer sex gift pack with lots of assorted condoms and lubes!*

**Q:** I've been reading IMPACT PRESS for some time now and it's good to see that you offer this type of column for people like me. I'm an 18-year-old African American female who is HIV positive and so is my boyfriend. We have had unprotected sex and I did a pregnancy test and now I am

pregnant. I'm not really sure what to do at this point. We haven't told anyone this. What should we do? Should I get an abortion or keep it? It'll just get AIDS anyway, right? Please tell me what I should do.

Florida Mom?

**A:** The very first thing that you need to do is to contact a physician in your area. You can contact your local health department and they will have a specialty care clinic where you can receive medical attention on a sliding scale or even free of charge if you qualify. Now let me tell you why this is so important. Not every baby born to an HIV infected mother is actually infected. Usually without medical treatment about 25 – 35% of all babies become infected. With treatment though, you can bring that number down to about 3%. So you see if you get to a doctor they can start you on a regimen of medicine that can bring the odds much lower. Pregnant women living with HIV are generally offered a special

Now, in regards to whether you want to keep the baby or not, that's between you and your boyfriend. I might suggest that you contact your local Planned Parenthood Office and they can offer you counseling as well as the Doctors at the Specialty care clinic at your local health department. They can also get you in touch with a case manager that can help you with getting services from various other programs as well.

Hang in there okay. There are a lot of people out there who want to help you, but they can't contact you... you have to contact them. So make the first move and call the Florida AIDS Hotline at 1-800-FLA-AIDS. They can give you all the locations of all the places I listed above. Or give my office a call at (813) 307-4409.

#### Mail letters to:

Jeffrey-John Nunziata, FL Dept. of Health  
Area 6 HIV Program Office  
Asst. HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator &  
Statewide Trainer  
4000 W. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd., Tampa, FL 33614-7093

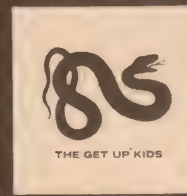
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# Put Down That Chicken, It's Time for Change

By Adam Finley

**YOU KNOW THAT OLD SAYING** that goes "The more things stay the same, the more they look the same because they haven't changed and consequently that results in something not going through any changes and hence, looking the same?"

That's actual paraphrased. The original quote is twelve pages long. I mention this because I'm looking around this great country of ours, from the shores of Maui to the Mountains of Busch and I'm not seeing any change. Moreover, I'm not seeing anybody who wants to see change occur, or who wants to volunteer for the Change Brigade, which is the name I just made up for those of us who want to go out and make change and who charge a modest one-time-only member fee of just fifteen dollars American.

A lot of people do want change. From the time they wake up to the time they wake up again they see things about this country they'd like to change. They may even form committees to discuss these changes:

**Leader-** I'd like to thank everyone for coming to the meeting. Linda will now read from the list we made at our last meeting of things we believe should be changed. Linda?

**Linda-** Thank you. Ahem. The War on Drugs, the welfare system, U.S. involvement in foreign affairs, and animal testing.

**Leader-** Are there any questions?

**Man (raising his hand)-** What exactly do we want to change about these things?

**Leader-** Well, we don't like them how they are.

**Man-** OK...

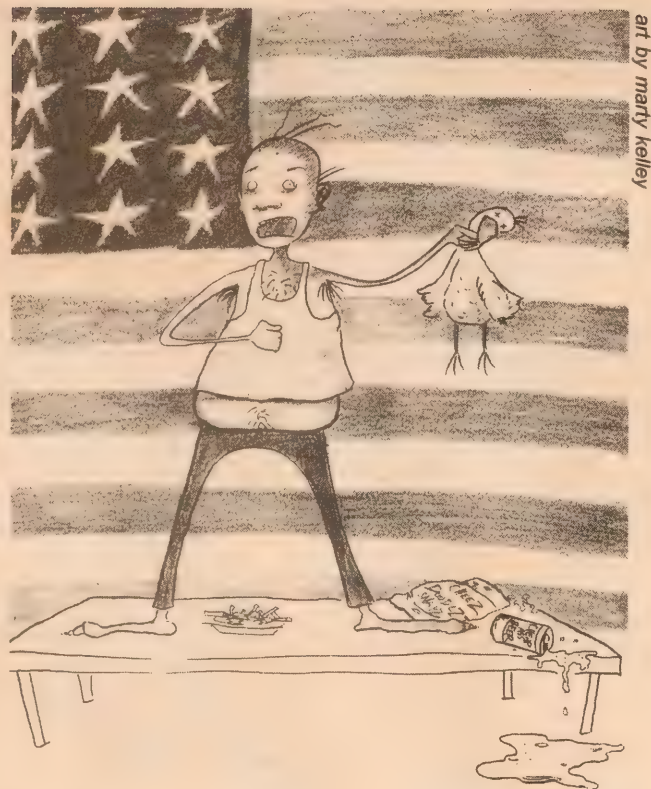
**Leader-** So there you go.

**Man-** But you just named four things, you didn't say why they needed to be changed.

**Leader-** That's what we do, here. We list things we don't like. We used to be a club for people who didn't like things and we merged with a club for people who like to list things.

**Man-** Well what about animal testing?

**Leader-** We feel animals should not be tested.



**Linda-** Well, they should be allowed to take college entrance exams.

**Leader-** Linda is right. And rabbits from low-income families should receive federal assistance.

**Man-** You're an idiot.

**Leader-** I don't like what you just said. Linda, add what he said to the list.

Maybe we all need to be reminded of what "change" actually means, that it doesn't mean super-sizing or downsizing or packing your Snickers with more peanuts. It means that, despite their benign acronyms, KFC still fries their chicken, and rapper ODB's parents still haven't married. The point is, we're getting used to a kind of "pretend change," where ideals are repackaged and offered to us as something bold and new.

Look around. There's nothing "bold and new" happening. It's just more of the same. More corporate gluttony, more boxes of Ritz Bitz, more Doublestuf Oreos, more clever names for vanilla ice cream, more government rhetoric, and more than a thousand ways to make "chicken carcass" sound appetizing. The packaging is different, but the product is still the same.

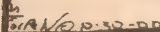
Some of you are pretty riled up at this point. You're clutching this magazine in your fist, standing on your coffee table and shouting "By golly, I'm going to bread this roasted chicken and cut it into tiny pieces and call them 'chickuggets,' that name hasn't been used yet!" But you miss my perhaps-too-subtle point. Put the chicken down, turn off the TV, and go out and create some real change. It's not easy, but it is worth it.

I hear they did it all the time in the 60s. ¶¶



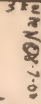
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# Why is the U. S. Rebuilding the Indonesian Military?

By David Mericle

In a little-noticed article earlier this year, *The New York Times* revealed that the United States and Indonesia had resumed military cooperation. The announcement was repulsive, terrifying, and utterly predictable.

From 1965 to 1998, the Indonesian military under General Suharto ruled the country through terror and bloodshed. It had come to power in a coup in 1965, in which, according to the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, "the United States was directly involved." Immediately after the coup, the fascist leadership of the military set out to annihilate the country's mass organizations with the intention of eliminating opposition to the new regime. The crimes that followed the coup were described by the CIA, which was heavily involved, as "one of the ghastliest and most concentrated blood-lettings of current times" according to Peter Dale Scott in the *Pacific Affairs* article "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno". Noam Chomsky, in the 1999 article "Why Americans should care about East Timor," said it was comparable to the acts of Hitler and Stalin, and "one of the worst mass murders of the 20th century"

Systematically traveling from one village to the next throughout the archipelago, the Indonesian army killed political leaders, anti-imperialists, workers, landless peasants, students, and anyone associated with the progressive popular organizations. The quick, well-coordinated massacres would never have been possible without US military aid, specifically an army communications system, and extensive lists of names of people to murder provided to the Indonesian army by the CIA. *Time Magazine* reported:

"The killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a serious sanitation problem in East Java and Northern Sumatra where the humid air bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travelers from these areas tell of small rivers and streams that have been literally clogged with bodies."

As many as one million people were murdered in the campaign. At the US State Department, the agency's former Indonesia expert, Howard Federspeil, said, "No one cared." In the ensuing decades, Suharto's murderous dictatorship was consistently supported by every US president from Jimmy Carter and his "human rights" administration to Bill Clinton, who called Suharto "our kind of guy."

Approximately a decade after its first series of massacres, the Indonesian military invaded East Timor and initiated its second,

again with the complete support of the United States. Timorese resistor Mari Alkatiri summarized the consequences of the Indonesian invasion and occupation during testimony to the Decolonization Committee of the United Nations in October, 1980:

"The crimes committed by the government of Indonesia, and the destruction perpetrated by its invading army, turned East Timor, once a bountiful land, into a prairie of fire and destruction ... One-third of the population of the territory has died from the war, famine caused by deliberate destruction of crops, disease for lack of medical assistance, mass executions, [and] chemical weapons, such as napalm, defoliants, and poisoned gas. "

The State Department admitted that 95% of the military equipment used in the invasion was from the US. Nevertheless, Representative Morgan argued in Congress, "To cut out our military assistance program in that country could have an adverse impact on the U.S. national interests in that area." In this case as in all others, the high and mighty "national interests" were nothing more than the interests of multinational corporations, interests that could only be enforced with "military assistance."

During the late 1990s, the Asian Financial Crisis, popular protests, and Suharto's ineptitude produced a volatile situation in Indonesia. Like a colonial power conceding political independence to acquiescent local elites to avoid compromising its economic interests, the United States asked Suharto, as reliable as any colonial administrator, to resign. He did, and a parliamentary democracy developed in place of the military regime. The influence of the military declined, but not without one last pogrom in East Timor last year.

The mass media (mostly the U.S.), with only guarded and infrequent references to US guilt in the carnage of the previous decades, showered praise on the United States for its supposed concern for democracy. The crimes of the Indonesian military were seldom mentioned – indeed, Suharto is criticized for corruption or at worst "human rights abuses," a callous characterization of the murder of over a million people – and when these atrocities were acknowledged, almost exclusively with respect to East Timor, they were usually portrayed exclusively as sins of Indonesia, which makes one wonder if a soldier indoctrinated, trained, and armed by the United States could even be considered Indonesian. That promoting democracy was not the motivation for US policy is irrefutably proven by the resumption of support for the Indonesian military, which constitutes the single greatest threat to democracy in the country. The article on May 24, 2000 in *The New York Times* reported:





art by eric spiller

With barely a moment's hesitation, the United States has again allied itself with the perpetrators of two of the last half-century's worst massacres. Confronted with democracy in Indonesia, the United States is rebuilding the foundation for tyranny.

"These exercises are a prelude to a much larger military-to-military program the administration will present Congress this month to reward the new, democratically elected Indonesian government..."

Justifying renewed military support as a "reward" for a democratizing country recovering from over three decades of military oppression is a marvel of irrationality equivalent to giving crack as a present to a rehabilitated junkie. The reality is that this is merely the first step in pursuing a strategy fundamentally similar to that followed prior to the coup in 1965. In strengthening the Indonesian military and reestablishing connections with leading officers, the United States is recreating an atmosphere that will permit the military to overthrow another civilian government. Restoring the military does not imply undermining the present government nor seeking to remove the newly established democratic regime. Rather, the purpose is to create an environment where, if a future democratic government loses control or ceases to be adequately subservient to foreign capital, the US will be in a position to reinstate a brutal military dictatorship to enforce its interests. An identical pattern is present throughout the recent history of US relations with much of

the rest of the world, particularly Latin America.

With barely a moment's hesitation, the United States has again allied itself with the perpetrators of two of the last half-century's worst massacres. Confronted with democracy in Indonesia, the United States is rebuilding the foundation for tyranny.

Any illusions of respect for democracy or the Indonesian people vanished as quickly as they appeared. US policy concerns itself with the interests of American capitalism. If another million people must be murdered to serve those interests, imperialism's cold logic dictates, so be it. As long as Indonesia remains trapped within the imperialist network, its rivers may flow with blood yet again. ❧

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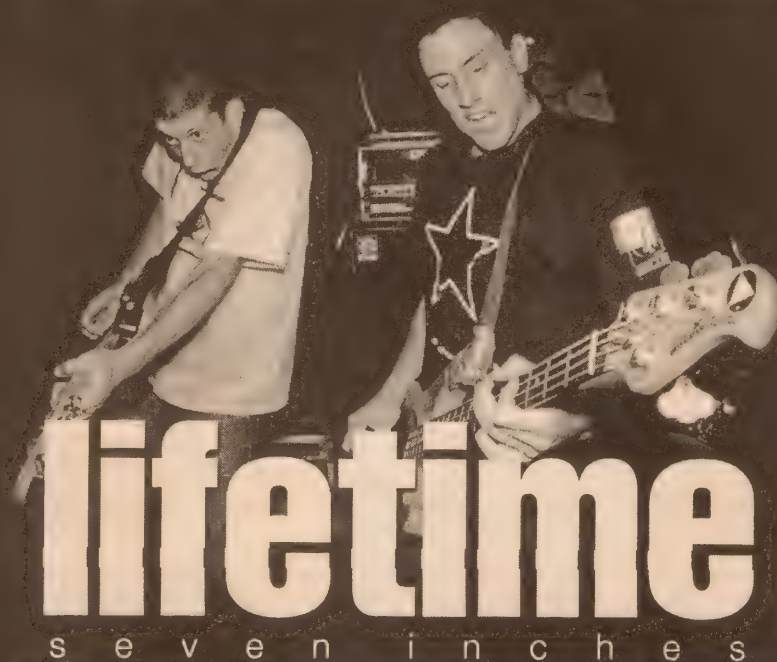
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# Confessions of an Ex-Bodybuilder

**Men and women seem to be obsessed with their bodies and more specifically, exercise. I totally understand why people are like this because I was once like them.**

By David Lucander

Females are not the only ones who obsess about their looks. So much attention has been paid to female body images and issues related to problems of over exercising while under-eating. Few people realize men share these same problems because we too are constantly bombarded with muscular male images.

I am a male who constantly worried about how I looked. I would ask myself: Are my pecs big enough? Do my biceps have enough pump in them? Is my back wide enough? I would go to the gym after school and workout every day for 2-3 hours. After about six months, I started to turn heads and get the attention of the regular guys at the gym. We would talk, critique each other's bodies and share tips about diet and new exercise routines. I would walk around ever mindful that my chest would stick out just enough to get noticed and my back would be tight enough to make my arms stick out like a cowboy reaching for his holster.

Now that I no longer obsess about my exercise routine, I am free. I have so many more hours in the day to read, write, and spend precious time with people who I truly care about. I no longer miss family birthday parties to get a work out done. When I am with a girl,

I do not feel like I have to tighten the muscles in my arm every time she touches them. When people talk to me, I know they are interested in me and not my body.

I must admit that I still work out once or twice a year. I feel that the mind and body are alike in that they both must be utilized to avoid atrophy. Just as the mind must think and read regularly, the body must also be used. I use my body to do things that it was made to do. Instead of doing a leg press, I go hiking. Rather than a bench press, I choose a trip on my mountain bike. I prefer a peaceful walk with a friend than an exhausting 2 mile run. I would so much rather use my whole body to do something pleasurable than train individual muscle groups so much that they hurt for over a week.

While I no longer consider myself a gym rat, I understand why some people find a home for themselves in the weight room. When I started working out, I bought countless bodybuilding magazines where I saw pictures of hulking men like Dorian Yates and Paul DeMayo. I would compare my body to theirs and never be happy with myself because I was measuring myself against unattainable standards. It was like measuring a guppy with a yardstick.



These images trapped and haunted me. I was a kid looking for an identity and the bodybuilding industry was eager to give it to me. I became Dave Lucander, the kid with the muscles. When I flipped through the pages of these magazines, I absorbed everything. I remembered every muscle that these guys had that I didn't have and I struggled to sculpt them. I squandered my money on the needless products that promised me better performance and a more tone body. I used many "nutritional" supplements including protein powders, Creatine Monohydrate, and ephedrine.

As a young teenager, I thrived on the newfound attention that my peers lavished on me. Guys on the football team would seek me out for advice on the latest body building cocktails or a new workout technique. Cute girls would ask me to flex and I would throw on fake modesty and deny their first request, but I would quickly give in once they persisted. I would flex my arms or remove my shirt and show them the chest that I had spent so many hours developing and building. One simple compliment about my body would elevate my mood for a whole day.

There was also something about the burning sensation that developed in my muscles that I grew addicted to. I learned to love the pain because to me, pain was an indicator that I was working hard. No pain, no gain...right? Well, I was wrong. There were days when I had trouble walking up my high school's stairs because my quads hurt so bad and my knees would give out from supporting too much weight for my still growing body. Imagine the irony of a muscle bound teen having trouble doing something as basic as climbing stairs.

I am pleased to say that I have matured a lot since those days. I realized that the attention people gave me was not because they wanted to befriend me but because they were interested in my muscular body.

I also discovered that once I found more fulfilling things to do, I no longer desired to spend my time in the gym. When I began working out, I did not have many friends and did not think about my life very much, so it seemed only natural for me to have wasted a few years in the gym just passing time. One day I picked up *Diet for a New America* by John Robbins and started reading. A few short weeks later, I began *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. After that, countless books flowed through my hands and countless thoughts came along with it. Although nothing that I read critically examined bodybuilding culture or the formation of a positive body image, what these books did do was show me a completely different way of thinking. I had never heard of the atrocities of this country until I read *People's History*. And until I read *Diet*

for a *New America*, I had never imagined a vegetarian as anyone but a crazy tree hugging hippie or a sensitive debutante girl. Being exposed to such radical new thought patterns made me look at my own life differently and my urges to spend my time in a smelly room under fluorescent lighting disappeared. I could no longer focus on my workouts because I would be thinking of what else I could be doing. Between sets, daydreams of new adventures would creep into my mind. I skipped my next workout. That one missed workout changed the way that I live my life forever.

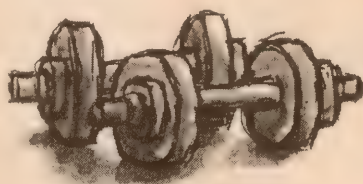
My personal and spiritual growth is no longer hindered by my obsessive habits. My mind is free to think because it is not occupied with how many sets and reps I can do on a leg press. I am not spending my time competing with every other guy for the trivial prize of best body. I no longer have to force myself to eat over two hundred grams of protein every day. I have swallowed my final gulp of raw eggs and skim milk laced with calorie dense weight gainer. And I don't have to take a two hour nap every day to recover from a strenuous workout.

Now I can see how countless images of what the male body is expected to look like are designed to make us feel insecure about how we look. By tapping into our insecurities, a multi-billion dollar a year "health" industry can profit from health club memberships, home fitness centers, and expensive body building supplements like Creatine Monohydrate, HMB, and standard weight gainer.

I have realized that my body will die off and rot away in time, so to fret about small details like an extra ripple in my stomach is needless. Now that I am older and wiser, I can see that exercise dominated almost three years

of my life. This was a psychological addiction and although my muscles were strong, I was weak.

I am now free from the petty worries about my body and I have never been happier. ◀◀



**When I started working out, I bought countless bodybuilding magazines where I saw pictures of hulking men like Dorian Yates and Paul DeMayo. I would compare my body to theirs and never be happy with myself because I was measuring myself against unattainable standards.**

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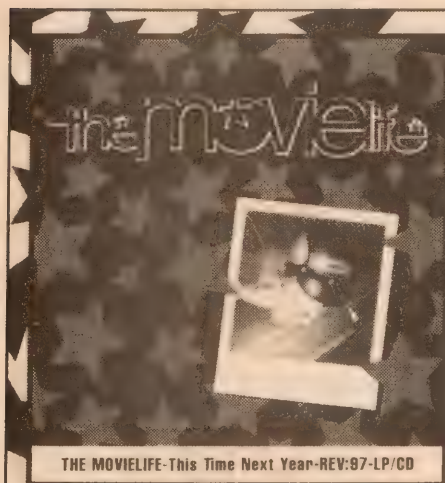
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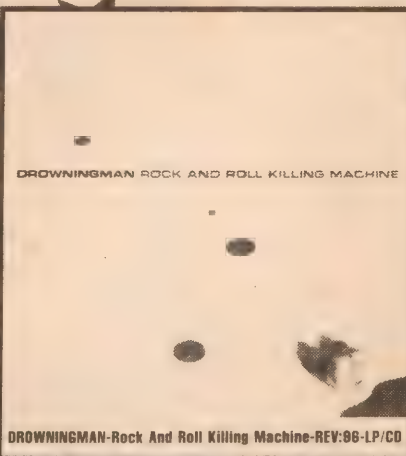
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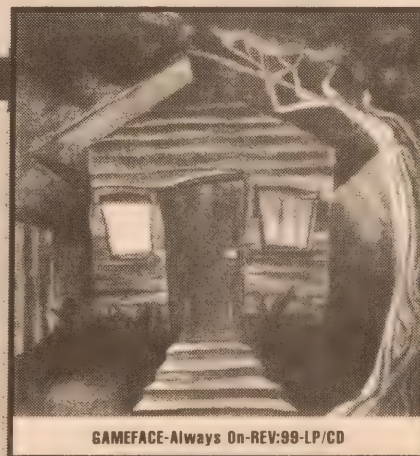
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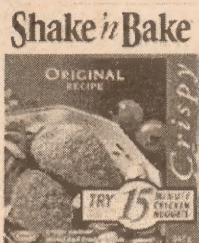
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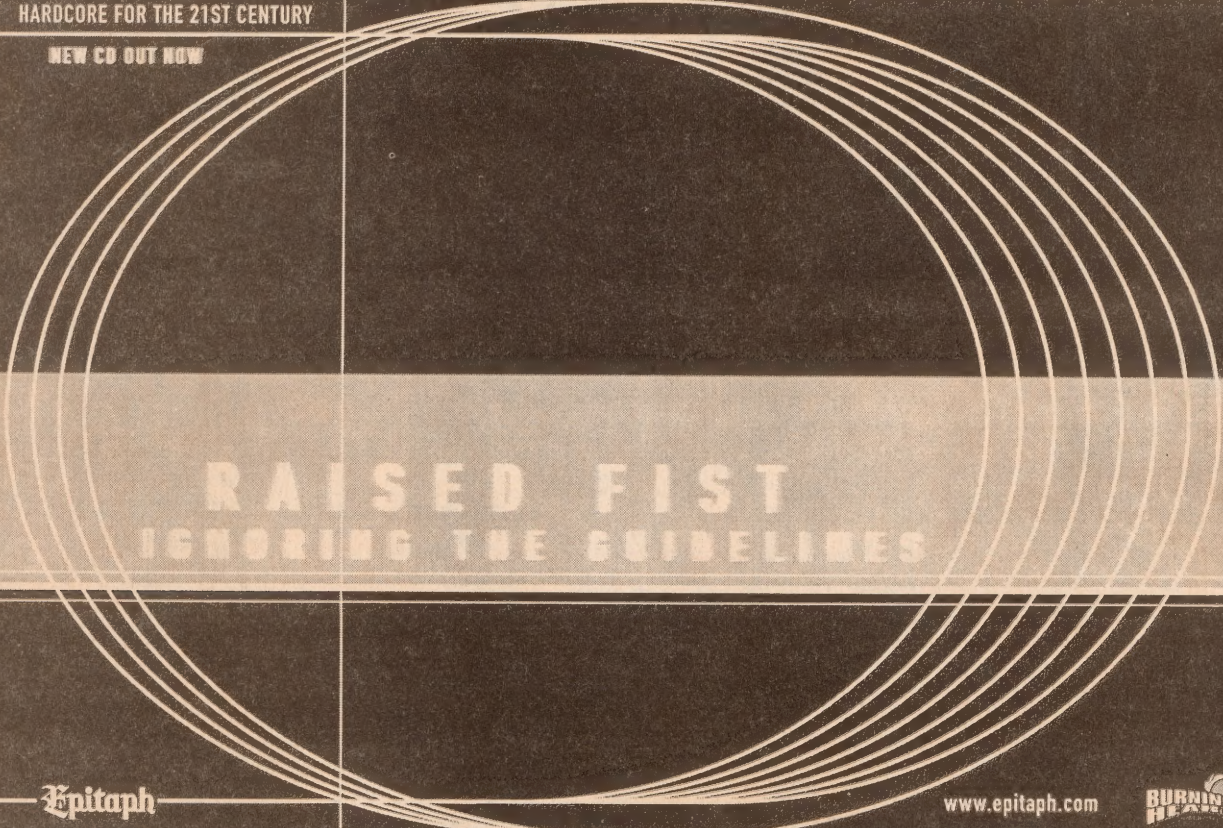
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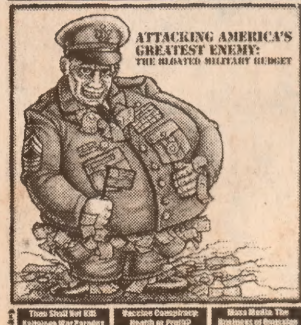
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**Issue #21, June/July '99, Cover Story: Imprisoning the Mind - Art Censorship in America --**  
Also: Facing 30; Death with Dignity or a .22; A Patriotic Left

**Issue #20, Apr/May '99, Cover Story: The Chaining of America --**  
Also: The Death Penalty -- Reassessing the Punishment; School of the Americas: Training Foreign Killers

**Issue #19, Feb/Mar '99, Cover Story: Population Control: How Many Are Too Many? --**  
Also: Imprisoning the Masses -- Dark Side of a Prison State; Human Rights Issues

**Issue #18, Dec/Jan '98-99, Cover Story: Interview with Michael Moore plus, Are Women Just a Bunch of Boobs --**  
Also: An Inside Look at the Homeless Problem

**Issue #17, Oct/Nov '98, Cover Story: Battle For Governor of Florida --**  
Also: Sexual Politics in the Workplace; Money Determines our Society

## IMPACT



### issue #26

**Issue #16, Aug/Sep '98, Cover Story: Schoolyard Armageddon --**  
Also: Life of a Pro-Abortionist; USA - We're No. 1; The Great Disservice of Nationalism

**Issue #15, Jun/Jul '98, Cover Story: CyberSociety --**  
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**Issue #14, Apr/May '98, Cover Story: ArtsPolitik --**  
Also: Paranoia; Anal Laws Sodomize Society; Environmental Chaos and Politics

**Issue #13, Feb/Mar '98, Cover Story: Human Cloning --**  
Also: Surviving Bulimia; Purchasing Condoms and Lubes; A News Addict Speaks Out

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Also: Preferential Treatment; The Culture of Anonymous Sex; Medical Marijuana

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Also: Antidepressants for Adolescents; The Swift Solution -- Food For Thought

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Also: Family Values - Witch Hunting in the '90s; Spies in the Media - CIA Journalists; Know Your Drunks - Two Kinds Explored

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**Issue #7, Feb/Mar '97, Cover Story: American Religion on the Cross --**  
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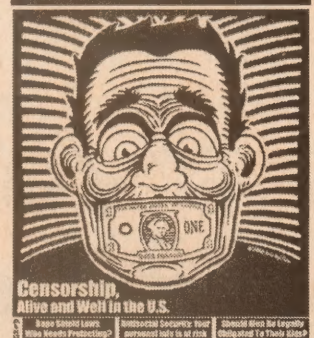
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### issue #27

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### issue #25



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